JOHN, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

Fr. *By permission of Earl Spencer*

MARLBOROUGH

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

BOOK ONE

CONSISTING OF VOLUMES I AND II
OF THE ORIGINAL WORK

GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
LONDON TORONTO WELLINGTON SYDNEY

Volume I first published October 1923
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
182 High Holborn, London, W.C.1
Reprinted October 1933
New edition, revised, published November 1934
Reprinted October 1939

Volume II first published October 1934
Reprinted October 1934

This edition in two Books first published 1947
Reprinted, 1949, 1955; 1958

Composed in Garamond type and printed by Western Printing Services, Bristol
Made in Great Britain

TO

THE GRENADIER GUARDS

THE 1ST GUARDS,

IN WHICH JOHN CHURCHILL,

AFTERWARDS DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH,

RECEIVED HIS FIRST COMMISSION ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1667,

OF WHICH HE WAS COLONEL FROM THE YEAR 1704 TO 1711

AND FROM 1714 TILL HIS DEATH,

AND WHICH SERVED UNDER HIM AT THE BATTLES OF

THE SCHELLENBERG, BLENHEIM, RAMILLIES, OUDENARDE,

AND MALPLAQUET,

AND IN ALL THE PRINCIPAL SIEGES AND OTHER

GREAT OPERATIONS

DURING TEN VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGNS,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR

IN MEMORY OF

THE COURTESIES AND KINDNESS

SHOWN TO HIM BY THE REGIMENT IN

THE GREAT WAR

ABBREVIATIONS

B.M. = British Museum Library.

C. = Chancery Records in the London Record Office.

C.S.P. = *Calendar of State Papers.*

C.S.P. (Dom.) = *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series.*

D.N.B. = *Dictionary of National Biography.*

H.M.C. = *Report of the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission.*

P.R.O. = The Public Record Office, London.

S.P. = State Papers.

For further details as to footnote references see the Bibliography (pp. 1004–1011).

In quoting from old documents and letters the original text has been preserved wherever it is significant. Letters of Marlborough and Sarah which enter directly into the narrative have been modernized in spelling, grammar, and punctuation so far as is convenient to the reader. But the archaic style and setting has been preserved, and occasionally words are left in characteristic spelling.

Documents never before made public are distinguished with an asterisk (★). In the case of unpublished letters to and from Marlborough preserved in the Blenheim collection no further reference is given.

All italics are the Author's, unless the contrary is stated.

In the diagrams, except where otherwise stated, fortresses held by the allies are shown as black stars and those occupied by the French as white stars.

METHOD OF DATING

Until 1752 dates in England and on the Continent differed owing to our delay in adopting the Reformed Calendar of Gregory XIII. The dates which prevailed in England were known as Old Style, those abroad as New Style. In the seventeenth century the difference was ten days, in the eighteenth century eleven days. For example, January 1, 1601 (O.S.), was January 11, 1601 (N.S.), and January 1, 1701 (O.S.), was January 12, 1701 (N.S.).

The method I have used is to give all dates of events that occurred in England and documents written in England in the Old Style, and of events that occurred abroad in New Style. In sea battles and a few other convenient cases the dates are given in both styles.

It was also customary at this time—at any rate, in English official documents—to date the year as beginning on Lady Day, March 25. What we should call January 1, 1700, was then called January 1, 1699, and so on for all days up to March 25, when 1700 began. This has been a fertile source of confusion. In this book all dates between January 1 and March 25 have been made to conform to the modern practice.

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VOLUME ONE

Volume One

PREFACE

"THERE are few successful commanders," says Creasy, "on whom Fame has shone so unwillingly as upon John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough." I believe this is true; and it is an interesting historical study to examine the causes which have made so great a contrast between the glory and importance of his deeds and the small regard of his countrymen for his memory. He commanded the armies of Europe against France for ten campaigns. He fought four great battles and many important actions. It is the common boast of his champions that he never fought a battle that he did not win, nor besieged a fortress he did not take. Amid all the chances and baffling accidents of war he produced victory with almost mechanical certainty. Even when fighting in fetters and hobbles, swayed and oppressed by influences which were wholly outside the military situation, he was able to produce the same result, varying only in degree. Nothing like this can be seen in military annals. His smaller campaigns were equally crowned by fortune. He never rode off any field except as a victor. He quitted war invincible: and no sooner was his guiding hand withdrawn than disaster overtook the armies he had led. Successive generations have not ceased to name him with Hannibal and Cæsar.

Until the advent of Napoleon no commander wielded such widespread power in Europe. Upon his person centred the union of nearly twenty confederate states. He held the Grand Alliance together no less by his diplomacy than by his victories. He rode into action with the combinations of three-quarters of Europe in his hand. His comprehension of the war extended to all theatres, and his authority alone secured design and concerted action. He animated the war at sea no less than on land, and established till the present time the British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean. His eye ranged far across the oceans, and the foundations of British dominion in the New World and in Asia were laid or strengthened as the result of his Continental policy. He was for six years not only the Commander-in-Chief of the Allies, but, though a subject,

virtually master of England. He was the head of the most glorious Administration in her history when he led Europe, saved the Austrian Empire, and broke irretrievably the exorbitant power of France. The union with Scotland was but a feature of a period in which our country made its greatest advances in world rank and fame.

In 1688 Europe drew swords in a quarrel which, with one uneasy interlude, was to last for a quarter of a century. Since the duel between Rome and Carthage there had been no such world war. It involved all the civilized peoples; it extended to every part of the accessible globe; it settled for some time or permanently the relative wealth and power, and the frontiers of almost every European state. It outlined their various inheritances to the new domains beyond the ocean. In its course it drew out, matched, and exhausted the life energies of the nations in the same way—though not, of course, with the same scientific thoroughness—as did the Great War through which we ourselves have passed. Indeed, there are other remarkable similarities between this period and the beginning of the twentieth century. There was the same peril that the supremacy of one race and culture would be imposed by military force upon all others. There was the impotence of Europe without British aid; the slow but sure acceptance by England of the challenge and the call; and the same tremendous, increasing development of British effort during the struggle.

The wars of William and Anne were no mere effort of national ambition or territorial gain. They were in essentials a struggle for the life and liberty not only of England, but of Protestant Europe. Marlborough's victorious sword established upon sure foundations the constitutional and Parliamentary structure of our country almost as it has come down to us to-day. He carried all that was best in the life-work of Oliver Cromwell and William III to an abiding conclusion. In no world conflict have the issues, according to modern standards, been more real and vital. In none has the duty to defend a righteous cause been more compulsive upon the British nation. In none have the results been more solid, more precious, more lasting. The triumph of the France of Louis XIV would have warped and restricted the development of the freedom we now enjoy, even more than the domination of Napoleon or of the German Kaiser.

It is usually pretended that Marlborough's personal affections followed his worldly interests and changed sides and agents with

them. He certainly abandoned King James, and quarrelled with King William. But apart from these two sovereigns, around whom ranged some of the supreme constitutional and religious struggles of our history, and in whose circle business of State overrode private attachments, his character shows an astonishing constancy. His romantic love for his wife Sarah during nearly fifty years of wedlock, his fidelity to the Princess and Queen he served without a break for the thirty years from 1682 to 1712, were the keynotes of his life. His main friendships and political connexions were proof against all the stresses and surprises of violent times when nothing was sure or safe. He worked in steady and mutual confidence with Halifax, Shrewsbury, Russell, and Legge for a generation. Godolphin was his close friend and ally for forty years. Death alone severed these ties. The same elements of stability and continuity marked his great period. The ten years of war, with their hazards, their puzzles, their ordeals, their temptations, only strengthened a brotherhood in arms with Prince Eugene, unmatched between captains of equal fame. Not all the wear and tear of the Grand Alliance, nor the ceaseless friction between England and Holland, disturbed his similar association with the Pensionary Heinsius. Cadogan was his Chief Staff Officer, and Cardonell his secretary through all his campaigns, and both shared his fortunes and misfortunes to the end.

Yet fame shines unwillingly upon the statesman and warrior whose exertions brought our island and all Europe safely through its perils and produced glorious results for Christendom. A long succession of the most famous writers of the English language have exhausted their resources of reproach and insult upon his name. Swift, Pope, Thackeray, and Macaulay in their different styles have vied with one another in presenting an odious portrait to posterity. Macpherson and Dalrymple have fed them with misleading or mendacious facts.

Neither of the two historic British parties has been concerned to defend Marlborough's national action. Every taunt, however bitter; every tale, however petty; every charge, however shameful, for which the incidents of a long career could afford a pretext, has been levelled against him. He in his lifetime remained silent, offering or leaving behind him no explanation or excuse, except his deeds. Yet these have sufficed to gather around him a literature more extensive than belongs to any military commander who was not also a sovereign. Hundreds of histories and biographies have been written about him and his wife Sarah. Many have been maliciously

hostile, and others have destroyed their effect through undiscriminating praise. Many more have been meritorious but unread. It is only within recent times that the new school of writers who are reconciling scientific history with literary style and popular comprehension have begun to make headway against the prejudice of two hundred years.

It is with a sense of deep responsibility that I have attempted the task of making John Churchill intelligible to the present generation. Many of his defenders have shown the highest ability and immense learning; but their voices have not prevailed against the prestige and art of his assailants. When in the closing months of his life Macaulay was challenged in his facts, in his methods, and in his bias by the brilliant but unknown Paget, he felt strong enough to treat the most searching correction and analysis with contempt. Posterity, he reflected, would read what he himself had written. His critics, if he but ignored them, would soon be forgotten. It may perhaps be so. But time is a long thing.

I hesitated about undertaking this work. But two of the most gifted men I have known urged me to it strongly. Lord Balfour, with all the rare refinement of his spacious mind, cool, questioning, critical, pressed it upon me with compelling enthusiasm. Lord Rosebery said, "Surely you must write *Duke John* [as he always called him]: he was a tremendous fellow." I said that I had from my childhood read everything I came across about him, but that Macaulay's story of the betrayal of the expedition against Brest was an obstacle I could not face. The aged and crippled statesman arose from the luncheon table, and, with great difficulty but sure knowledge, made his way along the passages of The Durdans to the exact nook in his capacious working library where "Paget's Examen" reposed. "There," he said, taking down this unknown, out-of-print masterpiece, "is the answer to Macaulay."

Paget's defence of the 'Camaret Bay Letter' has been judged valid by modern opinion. As these pages will show, I could not be satisfied with it. Paget, in fact, proved that Marlborough's alleged letter, betraying to the Jacobite Court the Brest expedition, could only have been written after he knew that it had been betrayed already, and could do no harm. My researches have convinced me that the document purporting to be a letter is a fabrication, and that no such letter exists or ever existed. The argument upon this point occupies about four chapters of this volume. Upon this issue I join battle. I believe that the Jacobite records preserved in the Scots

College in Paris are one of the greatest frauds of history. They are nothing more than the secret service reports of Jacobite agents and spies in England. It is astounding that so many famous writers should have accepted them to traduce not merely Marlborough, but the entire generation of statesmen and warriors of William and Anne, who bore England forward in the world as she has never been borne before or since. It is an aberration of historical technique.

In a portrait or impression the human figure is best shown by its true relation to the objects and scenes against which it is thrown, and by which it is defined. I have tried to unroll a riband of English history which stretches along the reigns of Charles II, James II, William and Mary, William III, and Anne. The riband is always of equal width. Through it runs the scarlet thread of John Churchill's life. In this volume we trace that thread often with difficulty and interruption. It slowly broadens until for a goodly lap it covers the entire history of our country and frays out extensively into the history of Europe. Then it will narrow again as time and age impose their decrees upon the human thrust. But the riband is meant to continue at its even spread.

I feel that, for one reason or another, an opportunity will be accorded to me to state in a manner which will receive consideration Marlborough's claim to a more just and a more generous judgment from his fellow-countrymen. In this work I am compelled before reaching the great period of his life to plough through years of struggle and to meet a whole host of sneers, calumnies, and grave accusations. The court is attentive, and I shall not be denied audience. It is my hope to recall this great shade from the past, and not only invest him with his panoply, but make him living and intimate to modern eyes. I hope to show that he was not only the foremost of English soldiers, but in the first rank among the statesmen of our history; not only that he was a Titan, for that is not disputed, but that he was a virtuous and benevolent being, eminently serviceable to his age and country, capable of drawing harmony and design from chaos, and one who only needed an earlier and still wider authority to have made a more ordered and a more tolerant civilization for his own time, and to help the future.

My cousin the present Duke of Marlborough has placed the Blenheim papers at my disposal. Earl Spencer and many other custodians of the treasures of the bygone years have shown me the utmost consideration. To them all I express my gratitude; also to Professor Trevelyan, who may think some sentences I have written

about Macaulay a poor return for his own historical reparations. But I can faithfully declare I have sought the truth. I have profited greatly from my conversations with Mr Keith Feiling, whose authority on this period stands so high. I am much indebted to Mr M. P. Ashley, who for the last four years has conducted my researches into the original manuscripts at Blenheim and Althorp, as well as in Paris, Vienna, and London, and has constantly aided me in reading and revising the text. His industry, judgment, and knowledge have led to the discovery of various errors, and also of some new facts which are not included in the current versions of Marlborough's life. We have tried to test all documents and authorities at the source; nevertheless we await with meekness every correction or contradiction which the multiplicate knowledge of students and critics will supply.

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

CHARTWELL
WESTERHAM

NOTE TO THE REVISED EDITION OF VOLUME ONE

SINCE this volume was first published it has been subjected to searching scrutiny not only by accepted authorities but by a very large reading public. I am agreeably surprised to find how few are the errors, considering the enormous number of statements of fact presented. They are for the most part technical, and concern the titles of regiments and persons, the footnotes, and the index. None of them affects in the slightest degree the argument or the emphasis. There are two only of substance which require mention here.

I was misled in applying the word 'Jesuit' to the Scots College in Paris. This description seems to have originated in the masterly analysis of the Carte Manuscripts which was published in *The English Historical Review* of April 1897 by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Arthur Parnell, R.E. It is plainly inaccurate and prejudicial.

Professor Trevelyan has made good his criticism that Mrs Manley cannot be described as "Lord Macaulay's witness," and that he had

not "transcribed whole passages" from her alleged work *The New Atlantis*. I had based myself upon "Paget's Examen," the relevant material in which was first published during Macaulay's lifetime and not challenged by him. I have dealt fully with this point in my preface to the reprint of "Paget's Examen" which has recently been published.[1]

Macaulay undoubtedly read *The New Atlantis*. He adopted the same view as Mrs Manley about Marlborough's loves and marriage; but he nowhere in his *History* specifically cites Mrs Manley or *The New Atlantis* as his authority, and he may well have founded his aspersions upon other scurrilous contemporary publications of those times. In all other respects but this I adhere to what I have felt it my duty to write about Lord Macaulay's treatment of Marlborough.

I desire to express my thanks to all those who have written to me upon this volume.

The small errors referred to in my first paragraph above have, of course, been corrected for the present edition.

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

[1] *The New "Examen,"* by J. Paget (the Haworth Press, 1934).

Chapter One

ASHE HOUSE

1644–1661

IN January 1644 a Devonshire lady, Eleanor (or Ellen), widow of Sir John Drake, alarmed by the Royalist activities in the West Country, had asked for a Roundhead garrison to protect her house at Ashe, near Axminster.[1] She was "of good affection" to the Parliament, had aided them with money and provisions, and had "animated her tenants in seven adjoining parishes" to adhere to their cause. The troops were sent; but before they could fortify the place Lord Poulett, a neighbour who commanded for the King, marched upon it with his Irish soldiers, drove out the Parliamentarians, burned the house, and "stripped the good lady, who, almost naked and without shoe to her foot but what she afterwards begged, fled to Lyme for safety."

Here she encountered fresh hardships. The Roundhead seaport of Lyme Regis was soon attacked by the Royal forces. Early in April Prince Maurice, with six thousand men and "an excellent artillery," laid siege to the town. The story of its resolute defence is a cameo of the Civil War. For nearly three months a primitive, fitful, fierce combat was waged along and across the meagre ramparts and ditches which protected the townsfolk. Women aided the garrison in their stubborn resistance, relieving them in their watch by night and handing up the powder and ball in action. Colonel Blake, afterwards the famous Admiral of the Commonwealth, commanded the town. He several times offered the Royalists to open a breach in his breastworks and fight out the issue face to face on a front of twenty or on a front of ten men. His leadership, and twenty-six sermons by an eloquent Puritan divine, sustained the courage of the defenders. They depended for their supplies upon the sea. From time to time ships came in sight and aroused hopes and fears in both camps.

Lady Drake was for a while in extreme distress. She must have watched the coming of ships with mingled feelings. The Royalist

[1] For this chapter see the map facing p. 190.

navy, such as it was, was commanded by her sister's grandson, James Ley, third Earl of Marlborough.[1] Every week it was rumoured that her dreaded relation would arrive from the Channel Islands with reinforcements for the enemy. But he never came. The Parliament held the seas. Only Roundhead ships appeared. Eleanor endured privations, bombardments, and burnings for nearly three months. She was for her livelihood "reduced to the spinning and knitting of stockings, in which miserable condition she continued until the siege of Lyme was raised" by the arrival of a relieving Puritan army from London under the Earl of Essex, "whereof she got away and came to Parliament."[2]

Her son John was no help to her in her misfortunes. We have been assured that he was "loyal to the King and on bad terms with his Puritan mother."[3] But this seems incorrect. He was, on the contrary, at this time himself a prisoner of war in Prince Maurice's hands, and it was his mother who exerted herself on his behalf. Her sister, the Countess of Marlborough, stood high with the Royalists and appealed for the release of the captive. But the Parliamentary forces were now moving towards Axminster, and as the young Drake had said imprudently that he would get Lord Poulett's house burned in revenge for the burning of Ashe, his liberation was not unnaturally refused.

Lady Drake, though a resolute Puritan, continued to address herself to both sides, invoking with the Royalists her sister's, and with the Roundheads her own political merit. On September 28, 1644, Parliament ordered "that being wholly ruined by the enemy forces, she should have a furnished house in London rent free, £100 at once and £5 a week." The Westminster Commissioners accordingly four days later selected for her the house of a Royalist gentleman then still in arms—Sir Thomas Reynell; and she remained in these quarters for nearly four years, pursuing her claims for compensation through the slowly working mills of Westminster. Sir Thomas made his peace with Parliament and 'compounded for'—that is, ransomed—his house in 1646. He demanded reinstatement,

[1] Wolseley calls James Ley wrongly (*Life of Marlborough*, i, 8) the second Earl of Marlborough, and rightly (ii, 64) the third Earl of Marlborough.

[2] This account of the activities of Eleanor, Lady Drake, is based on *C.S.P.* (*Compounding*), pp. 65–66, 1051–53, 1317; her petition of March 22, 1648, to the House of Lords in *H.M.C.*, vii, 16*b*; and A. R. Bayley, *The Great Civil War in Dorset*, p. 129. Bayley, chapter vi, gives a good description of the siege of Lyme Regis.

[3] Wolseley (ii, 8) describes John Drake as a Royalist, but *C.S.P.* (*Compounding*), p. 866, disproves this.

as was his right; and he complained that Lady Drake during her tenancy "had digged up the ground and pulled up the floors in search of treasure." Nevertheless she continued to reside there in his despite, and perseveringly pursued her case against Lord Poulett for the burning of Ashe; and she had sufficient credit with the now irresistible Parliamentarians to carry it at last to a conclusion in the spring of 1648, when she was awarded £1500 compensation, to be paid out of Lord Poulett's estate.

It had taken Eleanor four years to secure the award. Two years more were required to extract the money from the delinquent, upon whose rents meanwhile she had a virtual receivership. In July 1650 she complained to Parliament that Lord Poulett still owed her £600. A further laborious investigation was set on foot. Six years passed after the burning of Ashe, which she claimed had lost her £6000, before Lady Drake recovered her £1500 compensation. She had need of it—and, indeed, of every penny. Hers was a family divided against itself by the wars. Her son fought for the Parliament; her son-in-law, Winston Churchill, fought for the King. Both he and his father had taken arms in the Royal cause from the early days. Both in turn—the father first[1]—were drawn into the clutches of the Parliament. The Dorsetshire Standing Committee which dealt with the cases of the local Royalists reports in its minutes that in April 1646 John Churchill, a lawyer of some eminence, of Wootton Glanville, near Sherborne, had stated before them that he had formerly been nominated a Commissioner for the King; but he pleaded that in November 1645 he had taken the National Covenant and the Negative Oath. He had paid £300 for the Parliamentary garrison at Weymouth, and £100 on account of his personal estate. Moreover, reported the Committee, he was sixty years of age and unable to travel. In these circumstances in August 1646 he was fined £440, and a month later the sequestration of his estates was suspended.

The reckoning with his son Winston was delayed.[2] Joining the King's army at twenty-two, he had made some mark upon the battlefields. He had become a captain of horse, and his bearing had been noted in the fights at Lansdown Hill and Roundway Down. He was a youthful, staunch, and bigoted adherent of the King. Towards

[1] For the composition paid by the first Duke of Marlborough's grandfather see Bayley, p. 405 (local records); *C.S.P.* (*Compounding*), pp. 1176–77 (central records).

[2] For the composition paid by the first Duke of Marlborough's father see *C.S.P.* (*Compounding*), pp. 299, 1177; *C.S.P.* (*Advance of Money*), 1092–93; vol. ccxxi of the Royalist composition papers in the P.R.O.

the end of 1645 he was wounded, and his plight amid the Roundheads now victorious throughout Dorset and Devon was most awkward. However, he had a refuge among the enemy. His father's house at Wootton Glanville was only a day's ride from Ashe. He was married to Lady Drake's third daughter, Elizabeth.

No one has hitherto been able to fix the date of the marriage, or whether it took place before or during the Civil Wars. The Chancery Records, however, state that in October 1649 Winston and his wife Elizabeth sued Sir Henry Rosewell, one of the executors of Sir John Drake, for part of her inheritance, due to her when she was twenty-one. From this case it appears that Sir John died in October 1636, that Elizabeth was twenty-one in February 1644, and that she married in May of that same year.[1] We know that a formal settlement was made between Winston's father and Lady Drake giving Elizabeth a dowry of £1500. As John Drake had at least four daughters, all of whom were left a similar capital in land, besides the estates left to his widow and son, the Drakes were evidently a substantial family.

It is remarkable that such contracts should have been effected between persons so sharply divided by the actual fighting of the Civil Wars. We can see the stresses of the times from the fact that Winston's first child, Arabella, of whom more later, was not born till 1649, or more than five years after the date of the marriage, although thereafter children were born almost every year. No doubt the couple were parted by the severities of the war, and did not live regularly together till the struggle in the Western counties was ended. It is probable that Elizabeth lived with her mother during the whole of the fighting, and that from about the beginning of 1646 Winston joined her there. At any rate, from that time forward the two young people, wedded across the lines of civil war, lay low in the ruins of Ashe, and hoped to remain unnoticed or unpersecuted until the times should mend.

For a while all went well. But a regular system of informers had been set on foot, and, despite Winston's Roundhead connexions and Lady Drake's influence and record, the case against him was not allowed to lapse. At the end of 1649 he was charged with having been a captain in the King's army. According to the Dorsetshire

[1] C.6/145, No. 51. Only the interrogatories of the Chancery case exist, and they are so badly damaged that the year of the lawsuit does not appear. From the evidence of the Committee on Compounding, however, it would seem to have taken place not later than 1649.

records, witnesses, greedy, interested, but none the less credible, certified that as late as December 1645 Winston was still in the field against the Parliament, that he had been shot through the arm by the forces under Colonel Starr, and that he had resisted to the end with the royal garrison at Bristol. None of these facts could be rebutted.

However, the processes of law continued to work obstinately in spite of war and revolution. Beaten foes had rights which, unless specifically abolished by statute, they could assert. The delinquent captain fell back upon the law. He sought to collect debts owing to him from others. He claimed that a thousand marks given to his wife by her father, the late Sir John Drake, could not be sequestered. He laboured to put off the day when the final sentence would be pronounced. Long delays resulted. By August 1650 the Parliamentary authorities had lost patience. "Some cases," say their records,

> are sued out for no other end but to protract time, as that of Winston Churchill, who, it seems by his order, pretended his father (John Churchill) and Lady Ellen Drake had an interest in his portion, whereas he has still a suit depending against Colonel William Fry and Sir Henry Rosewell in his own name, only for his wife's portion; had anybody else a title to it, he would not have commenced such a suit. As to his being in arms, he will surely not so far degenerate from his principles as to deny it.

Nevertheless, it was not till April 29, 1651, that the Commissioners for Compounding finally ordered that

> *Winston Churchill of Wootten Glanville in the county of Dorset, gent. do pay as a fine for his Delinquence the sum of Four hundred and four score pounds; whereof four hundred and forty-six pounds eighteen shillings is to be paid into the Treasury at Goldsmith's Hall, and the thirty-three pounds two shillings received already by our Treas. Mr Dawson of Sir Henry Rosewell in part of the money oweing by him to John Churchill, father of the said Winston, is hereby allowed of us in part of the sayd Four hundred and four score pounds.[1]

[1] S.P., 23/221, f. 855 and v. This document is endorsed on the back "The p'ticular of Winston Churchill gent of Glanvills Wooton in the countye of Dorsett.—A rente charge in fee of one hundred sixtye pounds p. Ann. uppon the whole state of John Churchill Esq, of Glanvill Wotton in the Countye of Dorsett excepting onely a leasehold of the College of Winchester which is not liable here too—[signed] W. Churchill." The amount of the fine is further confirmed by a paper headed "Accounts of the Dorset Sequestration Committee, 1652–4," on the back of which is given "The names of the severall psons whoes have payd theis somes followinge into the Treasury att Goldsmiths Hall for theire fines." These include "Winston Churchill," who had paid £446 18s. (S.P., 23/80, f. 282.) The only secondary authority the author has come across which gives this figure correctly is Dale, *History of Glanville's Wootton*.

Once a statement gets into the stream of history it is apt to flow on indefinitely. In Hutchins' *History of Dorset*, published in 1774, this sum of £446 18*s*. is, by a misprint, recorded as £4446 18*s*. This would indeed have been a remarkable fine—the equivalent of perhaps nearly £18,000 of our money—to inflict upon a small country gentleman. A long succession of historians—Coxe (1819), Wolseley (1894), Bayley (1910), Atkinson (1921), and Edwards (1926) —have not only repeated the erroneous and absurd figure, but have expatiated in turn upon its astonishing severity. From it they have concluded that Winston must have been most exceptionally obnoxious to the Parliament, whereas actually he was very nearly overlooked in the reckoning. Striking contrasts have been drawn between the treatment of father and son, which was in fact almost identical, and Winston has been credited with a far larger share in the wars than was his due. Thus tales are told.

The penalty was, however, severe for a man whose estate seems to have been worth only £160 a year.[1] Although Winston paid his fine at the end of 1651, he did not attempt to keep an independent home. Nor did he live with his father at Wootton Glanville. There may have been other reasons besides impoverishment for this. His father had married a second time about 1643;[2] Winston was apparently on bad terms with his stepmother, and it was to his mother-in-law rather that he turned for aid. When the ultimate judgment and compassion of the Almighty, as the victors would have expressed it, had become fully manifest throughout the West Country, Lady Drake sate indignant on the winning side amid her ruins, and Ashe House continued to be a refuge from poverty, if not from destitution, for the broken Cavalier, his young wife, and growing family. They do not seem to have returned home till Winston's father died in the year before the Restoration. Thus they lived at Ashe for thirteen years, and hard must those years have been. The

[1] It is clear from the preceding note and other references in vol. ccxxi of the composition papers that this sum settled on him by his father was the income for which Winston Churchill compounded; in addition his wife had at one time 1000 marks (£666 13*s*. 4*d*.) of her own; but there is no indication that Winston Churchill had a further income for which he did not compound. It is true that Wolseley (i, 19) quotes Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, as saying that Winston, when he married, had £1000 a year given him by his father. But all that the Spencer MSS., from which Wolseley derived his information, state is that Winston Churchill "had about £1000 a year from his father"—*i.e.*, presumably when his father died in 1659. See Appendix, II.

[2] In her reply to Winston Churchill's bill in Chancery of July 10, 1660, Mrs Mary Churchill refers to an agreement made when she was about to marry John Churchill "seventeen years ago" (C.6/148, No. 27).

whole family dwelt upon the hospitality or charity of a mother-in-law of difficult, imperious, and acquisitive temper; a crowded brood in a lean and war-scarred house, between them and whose owner lay the fierce contentions of the times.

No record is in existence of the daily round of the composite Drake household. We must suppose from its long continuance that family affection and sheer necessity triumphed over unspeakable differences of sentiment and conviction. Lady Drake did her duty faithfully to her daughter's family. She fed, clothed, and sheltered them in such portions of her house as their partisans had left her. They, having scarcely any other resources, accepted her bounty. While Lady Drake, vaunting her fidelity, pursued her claims for compensation from the Parliament, Winston, with her aid and collusion, sought to escape its exactions. It may be that in this prolonged double effort to save as much as possible from the wreck of their affairs a comradeship of misfortune was added to family ties. It must, none the less, have been a queer and difficult home. We may judge of their straitened means by the fact that they could not afford to put a fresh roof over the burned-out parts of the house until after the Restoration. They huddled together all these years in the one remaining wing. The war had impoverished the whole West countryside, and to keep up the style of gentlefolk and educate children must have imposed a severe frugality on all at Ashe.

To the procreation of children and the slow excitements of frequent litigation Winston added the relief of writing and the study of heraldry. In a substantial and erudite volume, *Divi Britannici*, still widely extant and universally unread, he explored from "the Year of the World 2855" downwards those principles of the Divine Right of Kings for which he had fought and suffered. He went so far in doctrine as to shock even Royalist circles by proclaiming the right of the Crown to levy taxation by its mere motion. To quote from this book[1] is to meet its author across the centuries. In his dedication to Charles II he refers earnestly to Cromwell as

> A Devil . . . who . . . intended questionless the same Violence to your Sacred Person, as was offer'd to that of your Father, had not your Tutelar Angels, like those which are said to have preserv'd Lot from the Sodomites, shut the Door of Government upon him, and baffled his Ambition by the Revolt of those whom himself first taught to Rebell.

[1] *Divi Britannici*, pp. 43, 323–324, 355.

Of the origin of the Scottish nation he gives the following account:

> The Scots would be thought a Branch of the antique Scythian Stock, . . . and they have this colour above many others, that as their Ancestors are entituled to as ancient Barbarity as those of any other Nation whatever, so like those rude Scythes, they have always been given to prey upon their Neighbours. . . . Some thinking them a By-slip of the Germans; others of the Scandians; some affirming them to be the Out-casts of some Mongrel Spaniards that were not permitted to live in Ireland, . . . and some there are that with no small probability take them to be a Miscellany of all these nations.

He cherished the theory that all nations derived their names from their food, dress, appearance, habits, etc. He thinks, therefore, the Britons got their name from a drink which the Greeks called "bruton or bruteion, which Athinæus defined as *ton krithinon oinon —i.e., Vinum hordeaceum*, Barley Wine." He expatiates on barley wine:

> Cæsar affirms that all other Nations of the known World drink Wine or Water only; but the Britains, saith he (who yet have Vines enough) make no other use of them, but for Arbours in their Gardens, or to adorn and set forth their houses, drinking a high and mighty liquor, different from that of any other Nation, made of Barley and Water, which being not so subtil in its operation as Wine, did yet warm as much, and nourish more, leaving space enough for the performance of many great Actions before it quite vanquisht the Spirits.

All this seems very sound doctrine so far as it goes.

Winston's account of the execution of the King shows the intensity of his political feelings and the vigour of his vocabulary.

> Here seemed to be the *Consummatum est* of all the happiness of this Kingdom, as well as of the Life of this King: For upon his Death the Vail of the Temple rent, and the Church was overthrown. An universal Darkness overspread the State, which lasted not for twelve hours only, but twelve years. The two great Luminaries of Law and Gospel were put out: Such as could not write supply'd the place of Judges, such as could not read of Bishops. Peace was maintain'd by War, Licentiousness by Fasting and Prayer. The Commonalty lost their Propriety, the Gentry their Liberty, the Nobility their Honour, the Clergy their Authority and Reverence. The Stream of Government ran down in new-cut Chanels, whose Waters were alwayes shallow and troubled: And new Engines were invented by the new Statesmen that had the steerage, to catch all sorts of Fish that came to their

Nets; some were undone by Sequestration others by Composition, some by Decimation or Proscription; In fine, it appear'd (when too late) that the whole Kingdom suffer'd more by his suffering then he himself, who being so humbled as he was, even unto death, falling beneath the scorn, mounted above the Envy of his Adversaries, and had this advantage by their Malice, to gain a better Crown then they took from him.

The preface to *Divi Britannici*, which was not published till 1675, contains in its dedication a sentence the force and dignity of which may justify the book. It was, wrote the author, "begun when everybody thought that the monarchy had ended and would have been buried in the same grave with your martyred father," and "that none of us that had served that blessed Prince had any other weapons left us but our pens to show the justice of our zeal by that of his title."

Since Arabella had been born on February 28, 1649,[1] births and deaths swiftly succeeded one another with almost annual regularity. Mrs Winston Churchill had twelve children, of whom seven died in infancy. The third child of these twelve and the eldest son to live is the hero of this account. It is curious that no previous biographer—among so many—should have discovered the entry of his birth. A mystery has been made of it, which historians have used devious methods to solve. It is still often wrongly given.[2] We therefore offer the evidence from the parish register of St Michael's, Musbury, in facsimile.

(*John the sonne of Mr Winston Churchill,*
[*baptized*] *the* 26 *day of May*, 1650.)

[1] The parish registers of St Michael's, Musbury, which the present rector, the Rev. J. Ferguson, allowed the author to consult, give Arabella Churchill as having been born on February 28, 1649, and baptized on March 16, 1649. This corrects erroneous dates in Wolseley (i, 23) and in *D.N.B.*, which says she was born in March.

[2] *E.g.*, by Sir John Fortescue, *Marlborough* (1932). He was evidently baptized on the day he was born, as this date, May 26, 1650, is twice referred to by Marlborough as the date of his birth. There is, however, a second baptismal entry quoted by Lord Wolseley, which apparently, possibly through a transcriber's error, reads June 26. See Major W. H. Wilkin, "Some Notes on the Churchills of Ash," in *Pulman's Weekly News*, September 4, 1934.

The first ten years of his life were lived in the harsh conditions which have been suggested. We are here in the region of surmise. Facts are vague and few; but it seems easy to believe that the child grew up in a home where wants were often denied, and feelings and opinions had nearly always to be repressed. Public affairs marched forward, and their course was viewed at Ashe from standpoints separated by deep and living antagonisms. Blood and cruel injuries lay between those who gathered around the table. Outraged faith, ruined fortunes, and despairing loyalties were confronted by resolute, triumphant rebellion, and both sides were bound together by absolute dependence. It would be strange indeed if the children were not conscious of the chasm between their elders; if they never saw resentment on the one side, or felt patronage from the other; if they were never reminded that it was to their grandmother's wisdom and faithful championship of the cause of Parliament they owed the bread they ate. It would be strange if the ardent Cavalier then in his prime, poring over his books of history and heraldry, watching with soured eyes the Lord Protector's victories over the Dutch or the Spaniards and the grand position to which England seemed to have been raised by this arch-wrongdoer, and dreaming of a day when the King should enjoy his own again and the debts of Royalist and regicide be faithfully and sternly settled, should not have spoken words to his little son revealing the bitterness of his heart. The boy may well have learned to see things through his father's eyes, to long with him for a casting down of present pride and power, and have learned at the same time—at six, seven, and eight years of age—not to flaunt these opinions before half at least of those with whom he lived.

The two prevailing impressions which such experiences might arouse in the mind of a child would be, first, a hatred of poverty and dependence, and, secondly, the need of hiding thoughts and feelings from those to whom their expression would be repugnant. To have one set of opinions for one part of the family, and to use a different language to the other, may have been inculcated from John's earliest years. To win freedom from material subservience by the sure agency of money must have been planted in his heart's desire. To these was added a third: the importance of having friends and connexions on both sides of a public quarrel. Modern opinion assigns increasing importance to the influences of early years on the formation of character. Certainly the whole life of John Churchill bore the imprint of his youth. That impenetrable reserve under

graceful and courteous manners; those unceasing contacts and correspondences with opponents; that iron parsimony and personal frugality, never relaxed in the blaze of fortune and abundance; that hatred of waste and improvidence in all their forms—all these could find their roots in the bleak years at Ashe.

We may also suppose that Winston Churchill concerned himself a good deal with the early education of his children. For this he was not ill qualified. He had gathered, as his writings show, no inconsiderable store of historical knowledge. He presented in these years the curious figure of a cavalry captain, fresh from the wars, turned perforce recluse and bookworm. Time must have hung heavy on his hands. He had no estates to manage, no profession to pursue. He could not afford to travel; but in the teaching of his children he may well have found alike occupation and solace. Or, again, he may have loafed and brooded, leaving his children to play in the lanes and gardens of that tranquil countryside. The only information we have on John's education is provided by the unknown author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* (1713):

> He was born in the Time of the grand Rebellion, when his Father for Siding with the Royal Party against the Usurpers, who then prevailed, was under many Pressures, which were common to such as adher'd to the King. Yet, notwithstanding the Devastations and Plunderings, and other nefarious Practices and Acts of Cruelty which were daily committed by the licentious Soldiery, no Care was omitted on the Part of his tender Parents for a Liberal and Gentile Education. For he was no sooner out of the hands of the Women but he was given into those of a sequestered Clergyman, who made it his first concern to instil sound Principles of Religion into him, that the Seeds of humane Literature might take the deeper Root, and he from a just Knowledge of the Omnipotence of the Creator, might have a true Sense of the Dependence of the Creature.

Many modern biographers of Marlborough have asserted that Richard Farrant, rector of the neighbouring village of Musbury, was the clergyman here named. It would seem, however, that Farrant was no sequestered Royalist, but, on the contrary, a strong Puritan into whose hands Winston would hardly have let his son fall.[1]

[1] Wolseley (i, 28) was responsible for the assertion that Richard Farrant was Marlborough's "first regular tutor." *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* (p. 5), which is Wolseley's authority, only states that "he was given into [the hands] of a sequestered clergyman." But Farrant was a Puritan divine who became rector of Musbury—probably after the death of Matthew Drake in 1653—and was ejected as a Nonconformist in 1662. This information is based on the parish registers of Musbury and Coamy, *Nonconformist's Memorial, sub* "Musbury."

It is said that famous men are usually the product of unhappy childhood. The stern compression of circumstances, the twinges of adversity, the spur of slights and taunts in early years, are needed to evoke that ruthless fixity of purpose and tenacious mother-wit without which great actions are seldom accomplished. Certainly little in the environment of the young John Churchill should have deprived him of this stimulus; and by various long-descending channels there centred in him martial and dangerous fires.

Besides attending to his son's education Winston in his studious leisure bethought himself often of his pedigree and his arms. His researches into genealogy have produced as good an account of the origin of the Churchills as is likely to be required.[1] He traced his "Lyon Rampant, Argent upon a Sable coat," to Otho de Leon, Castelan of Gisor, "whome we call our common ancestor." The said Otho had two sons, Richard and Wandrill, Lord of Courcelle, "whose youngest son came into England with William the Conqueror." After recounting conscientiously several generations, Winston rested with confidence upon "John . . . Lord of Currichill, or as 'tis in divers records Chirechile, since called Churchill in Somersetshire," whose son, Sir Bartholomew de Churchill, "a man of great note in the tyme of King Steven, . . . defended the castle of Bristow against the Empress Maud and was slaine afterward in that warr." In the time of King Edward I, after the Barons' War, the lordship of Churchill was seized by the Crown and given to some favourite, whose posterity continued in possession till "nere about Henry VIII, his tyme." After passing through the hands of a family of the name of Jennings, of whom more later, it was sold eventually in 1652 to a Sir John Churchill, sometime Master of the Rolls, "and had come to my son in right of his wife, had it not been so unfortunately alianated by her said father."

All this was very fine, but when, descending these chains, we come to John, "ancestor of the present Churchills of Munston, and Roger, who by the daughter of Peverell, relict of Nicholas Meggs, has issue Mathew, father of Jaspar, my grandfather," we enter a rather shady phase. Edward Harley rudely asserts "that John Churchill's great grand-fther was a blacksmith who worked in the family of the Meggs,"[2] and certainly, as his great-great-great-grandfather married a Mrs Meggs, this seems very suspicious and

[1] Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 173–175.

[2] This reference, which is from a commonplace-book in the possession of the Duke of Portland, the author owes to the kindness of the Duke's librarian, Mr F. Needham.

even disquieting. In any case, there are strong grounds for believing that John's grandfather solidly improved the fortunes of this branch of the Churchill family. He was a practising lawyer, a deputy registrar of Chancery as well as a member of the Middle Temple, and lawyers were a prosperous class at this date.[1] Not only did he make a marriage himself into an aristocratic family, the Winstones,[2] but he seems to have arranged a step for his eldest son. For all the genealogical table produced by Winston, the Drakes were a more renowned and substantial family than the Churchills, of whom there were numerous branches of various conditions, some quite lowly, in Dorset alone; whereas John Drake's family descended eight in line from father to son, and all called John, through the Bernard Drakes, who were already in good repute at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, and passed on the properties at Musbury which had been in their hands from the fifteenth century. Bernard Drake had been a man of so robust quality that he had physically assaulted his relation, the renowned Sir Francis Drake, for daring to display upon his coat of arms a wyvern which he deemed poached from him. Hearing this, Queen Elizabeth conferred upon Sir Francis a wyvern dangling head downward from the yards of a ship, and asked Sir Bernard what he thought of that! He replied, with some temerity, "Madam, though you could give him a *finer*, yet you could not

[1] There is no doubt that he acquired considerable property. He bought Newton Montacute and lands at Wootton Glanville worth at least £600 a year (multiply by about four for the modern equivalent); he leased the neighbouring 'messuage' of Mintern from Winchester College, and he held mortgages on other Devonshire lands. He made a good marriage, and, finally, the fact that he was a man of enterprise and business ability is shown by the proposal made to his tenants at Wootton Glanville in 1639 that he should enclose the common waste in order to improve the agriculture of his property at the public expense. John Churchill *v.* Thomas and Edward Mayo (May 16, 1639, C.8/86, No. 101) mentions the proposal to enclose the common waste. Winston Churchill Knight *v.* Henry Mullett (November 15, 1669; C.5/460, No. 220) shows that at this date the waste was still unenclosed. Polwhele, *History of Devon*, and the various papers relating to the Chancery case of Winston Churchill *v.* Mrs Mary Churchill (1660–61) give details of the property of John Churchill senior and its value.

[2] Winston says in his letter to Blue Mantle about his coat of arms (1685), "My father by Sarah one of the daughters and co-heires of Sir Henry Winstone of Standish in the county of Gloster, had issue John my elder brother, who dyed presently after his birth, and myselfe who by my wife Elizabeth, third daughter of Sir John Drake of Ashe, have had a plentifull issue; to wit, eight sons and three daughters, my eldest daughter, and the only daughter now living was Arabella, now wife of Colonel Charles Godfrey; my eldest son is the present Lord Churchill who has marryd Sarah one of the daughters and co-heires of Richard Jennings of St Albans, the unfortunate looser of the mannor of Churchill, which is now to be sold, but my son being disappointed of having it given to him as Sir John Churchill allways did promise him, refuses to buy it."

give him an *ancienter* coat than mine."[1] So the marriage arranged for Winston with Lady Drake's daughter Elizabeth was socially satisfactory, and was, as we have seen, a veritable salvation during the Civil Wars.

Another streak of blood, strange and wanton, mingled in the child John's nature. His grandmother, Lady Drake, was herself the daughter of John, Lord Boteler, who had married the sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the favourite of James I and Charles I. Some students have amused themselves in tracing all the men—some of the greatest and wickedest in our history—who have descended from George Villiers, father of Buckingham. They are said to have repeatedly produced, across the centuries, the favourites, male and female, of kings and queens; and Chatham, and Pitt, as well as Marlborough, bear the distinction of this taint or genius.

When at length, at the end of her life, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, read—tardily, for it had been kept from her—Lediard's history of the Duke, she made the following extremely up-to-date comment upon this part of the subject: *"This History takes a great deal of Pains to make the Duke of Marlborough's Extraction very ancient. That may be true for aught I know; But it is no matter whether it be true or not in my opinion. For I value nobody for another's merit."[2]

Be this as it may, students of heredity have dilated upon this family tree. Galton cites it as one of the chief examples on which his thesis stands.[3] Winston himself has been accounted one of the most notable and potent of sires. Had he lived the full span, he would have witnessed within the space of twelve months his son gaining the battle of Ramillies and his daughter's son that of Almanza; and would have found himself acknowledged as the progenitor of the two greatest captains of the age at the head of the opposing armies of Britain and of France and Spain. Moreover, his third surviving son, Charles, became a soldier of well-tried distinction, and his naval son virtually managed the Admiralty during the years of war. The military strain flowed strong and clear from the captain of the Civil Wars, student of heraldry and history, and champion of the Divine Right. It was his blood, not his pen, that carried his message.

[1] Prince, *Worthies of Devon*, p. 245.

[2] Spencer MSS., paper enclosed in a letter from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, to David Mallet, October 4, 1744.

[3] Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, pp. 81, 154.

Although in this opening chapter we have set the reader in these bygone times, eleven years of our hero's life have already been accomplished. Ashe House, still unroofed, passes from the scene. Lord Wolseley was keenly stirred by its remnants and their surroundings. They awoke in this brave and skilful officer "memories of English glory." "Surely," he exclaims,

> the imagination is more fired and national sentiment more roused by a visit to the spot where one of our greatest countrymen was born and passed his childhood than by any written record of his deeds. This untidy farmhouse, with its [now] neglected gardens, and weed-choked fish-ponds, round which the poor, badly clothed boy sported during his early years, seems to recall his memory—aye, even the glory with which he covered England—more vividly than a visit to Blenheim Palace, or a walk over the famous position near the village of Höchstädt on the banks of the Danube. The place, the very air, seems charged with reminiscences of the great man who first drew breath here.[1]

These scenes certainly played a curiously persistent part in John Churchill's life. It was on the very soil of his childhood, in sight almost of his birthplace, that he was in 1685 to lead the Household Cavalry, feeling their way towards Monmouth's army; and three years later on the hill across the river he was to meet the Prince of Orange after deserting James II. So much for Ashe!

But now the times are changed. Oliver Cromwell is dead. General Monk has declared for a free Parliament. His troops have marched from Coldstream to Hounslow. The exiled Charles has issued the Declaration of Breda. The English people, by a gesture spontaneous and almost unanimous, have thrown off the double yoke of military and Puritan rule. Amid bonfires and the rejoicings of tumultuous crowds they welcome back their erstwhile hunted sovereign, and by one of those intense reactions, sometimes as violent in whole nations as in individuals, change in a spasm from oppressive virtue to unbridled indulgence. On April 23, 1661, Charles II was crowned at Westminster, and the restoration of the English monarchy was complete.

These memorable events produced swift repercussions at Ashe House. Winston Churchill passed at a stroke from the frown of an all-powerful Government to the favour of a King he had faithfully served. The frozen years were over, and the Cavaliers, emerg-

[1] Wolseley, i, 11–12.

ing from their retreats, walked abroad in the sun, seeking their lost estates. We need not grudge him these good days. He had acted with unswerving conviction and fidelity. He had drunk to the dregs the cup of defeat and subjugation. Its traces can be seen in his anxious eyes. Now was the time of reward. Instantly he sprang into many forms of activity. In 1661 he entered Parliament for Weymouth. In 1664 he became one of the original members of the Royal Society. Although his fortunes were much depleted, he regained his independence and a hearth of his own. More important than this, he stood in a modest way high in the favour of the new régime. He was received with consideration and even intimacy at Court. The terms under which Charles had returned to his kingdom were not such as to allow him to bestow wealth upon his humbler adherents. His sovereignty rested on a compromise between rebels and Royalists, between Anglicans and Presbyterians, between those who had seized estates and those who had lost them, between the passions of conflicting creeds and the pride of lately hostile regiments. He had no means of meeting even the just claims which faithful subjects might urge, still less could he satisfy the ravenous demands of long-nursed grievances or blatant imposture.

Burnet says, speaking of an earlier time:

> The herd of the Cavalier party was now very glorious and full of courage in their cups, though they had been very discreet managers of it in the field and in time of action, but now every one of them boasted he had killed his thousands, and all were full of merit and as full of high pretentions.

It is remarkable, however, that amid the crowds of hungry and often deserving suitors who thronged the antechambers of Whitehall so much attention should have been paid to the merits and services of Winston Churchill. Far more was done for him than for most. There was one cheap, sure way to please him. It was apparently well known. Accordingly an augmentation of arms and a crest unusual in a family of such standing was offered to his heraldic propensities.[1] Nevertheless, this evidence of royal favour and affection was not in itself sufficiently substantial, in Winston's

[1] The King to Sir Edward Walker, Garter, December 11, 1661: "Orders an augmentation of a St George's cross gules, on a canton argent, to the arms of Winston Churchill, of Miniterne [*sic*], co. Dorset, for service to the late King as captain of horse, and for his present loyalty as a member of the House of Commons." (*C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1661–62, p. 176.) For Winston's comment on this grant see Bath Papers, *loc. cit.*

opinion at least, to repair the injuries he had suffered in pocket and skin. He remained cherished but disconsolate, blazoning on his new coat of arms an uprooted oak above the motto *Fiel pero desdichado* ("Faithful but unfortunate"). More practical reliefs, as will be shown in the next chapter, were, however, in store.

Chapter Two

THE JOVIAL TIMES

1661–1669

OUR readers must now brace themselves for what will inevitably be a painful interlude. We must follow the fortunes or misfortunes of a maiden of seventeen and her younger brother as they successively entered a dissolute Court. The King was the fountain not only of honour, but of almost every form of worldly success and pleasure. Access to his presence, intimacy with his family or favourites, were the sole pathway even of modest and lawful ambition. An enormous proportion of the amenities and glories of the realm was engrossed in the narrow family circle of royal personages, friends, dependants, and important Ministers or agents of the Crown. Nearly all chances of distinction and solid professional advancement went by favour. An officer well established at Court was a different kind of officer from one who had nothing but the merits of his sword. The success of jurists and divines was similarly determined. The royal light shone where it listed, and those who caught its rays were above competition and almost beyond envy, except—an important exception—from rivals in their own select sphere.

If those were the conditions which ruled for men, how much more compulsive was the environment of the frailer sex. To sun oneself in the royal favour, to be admitted to the charmed circle, to have access to a royal lady, to be about the person of a queen or princess, was to have all this exclusive, elegant, ambitious, jostling world on one's doorstep and at one's footstool. Aged statesmen and prelates; eager, ardent, attractive youths; the old general, the young lieutenant—all produced whatever treasure they had to bestow to win the favour of the sovereign's mistress, or of his relations' mistresses, and of his important friends or servants. That nothing should be lacking to frame the picture of privilege and indulgence, it must be remembered that all this was dignified by the affairs of a growing state, by the presence of upright and venerable men and formidable matrons, providing the counterpoise of seriousness

and respectability. Scientists, philosophers, theologians, scholars; the mayors of cities, rugged sea-captains, veteran colonels, substantial merchants—all pressed forward on the fringes of the parade in the hope of being gratified by some fleeting glint of the royal radiance.

Such ideas seem remote to the English-speaking nations in these times. Here or in the United States we can scarcely conceive a social life where a royal, or at least a very wealthy person would not be compelled to set an example. Our aristocracy has largely passed from life into history; but our millionaires—the financiers, the successful pugilists, and the film stars who constitute our modern galaxy and enjoy the same kind of privilege as did the outstanding figures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—are all expected to lead model lives. We must make allowances for the backward conditions which prevailed in England and France, to say nothing of the barbarous countries, when Charles II and Louis XIV sat upon their thrones. There was undoubtedly an easy commerce of the sexes, marked at times by actual immorality. Men and women who had obtained power were often venal, and insolent besides, to those whom they dubbed their inferiors. Even judges were occasionally, and members of the legislature frequently, corrupt. Generals and admirals were usually jealous of each other, and sometimes stooped to intrigue to gain promotion. Even brilliant writers and pamphleteers, the journalists of those primitive times, wrote scurrilous gossip to please their patrons and employers. We in this happy and enlightened age must exercise our imagination to span the gulf which separates us from those lamentable, departed days. Securely established upon the rock of purity and virtue, ceaselessly cleansed by the strong tides of universal suffrage, we can afford to show tolerance and even indulgence towards the weaknesses and vices of those vanished generations without in any way compromising our own integrity.

It is strange indeed that such a system should have produced for many generations a succession of greater captains and abler statesmen than all our widely extended education, competitive examinations, and democratic system have put forth. Apart from the Church and the learned professions, the area of selection was restricted entirely to the circles of rank, wealth, and landed property. But these comprised several thousand families within which and among whom an extremely searching rivalry and appraisement prevailed. In this focus of the nation men were known and judged by their equals with intimate knowledge and a high degree of comprehen-

sion. There may be more truth than paradox in Lord Fisher's brutal maxim, "Favouritism is the secret of efficiency." There was, of course, great need to seek out ability. Appointments and promotions went largely by favour: but favour went largely by merit.

The English Court under Charles II was no Oriental scene of complete subservience, where women were secluded and where men approached the supreme figures with bated breath. It had not the super-centralization of the French Court under Louis XIV. The nobility and wealthy gentlefolk could live on their estates and, though excluded from the fame of national employment, had effective rights which they used frequently against the Crown. There were always independent powers in England. This counterpoise enhanced the strength of the central institution. There were degrees, values, and a hierarchy of considerable intrinsic virtue. A great society, sharply criticized, but accepted as supreme, indulging every caprice and vanity, and drawing to itself the chief forms of national excellence, presided at the summit of the realm.

It is important to remember also the differences of feeling and outlook which separate the men and women of these times from ourselves. They gave a very high—indeed, a dominating—place in their minds to religion. It played as large a part in the life of the seventeenth century as sport does now. One of their chief concerns was about the next world and how to be saved. Although ignorant compared with our standards, they were all deeply versed in the Bible and the Prayer Book. If they read few books, they studied them and digested them thoroughly. They had settled opinions on large questions of faith and doctrine, and were often ready to die or suffer on account of them.

Rank and breeding were second only to religion in their esteem. Every one in Court or county society was known, and all about them. Their forbears for many generations were carefully scrutinized. The coat of arms which denoted the family's achievements for hundreds of years was narrowly and jealously compared. It was not easy to get into the great world in those days, if one did not belong to it. A very clear line was drawn between 'gentles' and 'simples,' and the Church and the Law were almost the only ladders by which new talent could reach the highest positions. Indeed, religion and family pride together absorbed much of the sentiment now given to nationalism. The unity of Christendom had been ruptured at the Reformation, but strong cosmopolitan sympathies prevailed among the educated classes in all the Western countries.

We must not imagine that our ancestors were as careless and ignorant about international politics as are the immense political democracies of the present age. Had they been absorbed or amused as we are by the inexhaustible trivialities of the day, had their sense been dulled by speed, sport, luxury, and money-making, they could never have taken consciously the dire decisions without which England would not have been preserved. There were many solid citizens, secure in their estates, who pondered deeply and resolved valiantly upon the religious and political issues of the times. Although the administration of England had not attained to anything like the refined and ordered efficiency of France, there was already a strong collective view about fundamental dangers. There was already a recognizable if rudimentary Foreign Office opinion. And there were in every capital grave, independent men who gave lifelong thought to doctrine and policy. Their business was transacted by long personal letters, laboriously composed, in which every word was weighed, and conversations, few and far between, the purport of which was memorable. Government was then the business of sovereigns and of a small but serious ruling class, and, for all their crimes, errors, and shortcomings, they gave keen and sustained attention to their task.

In these days society was callous about prisoners and punishments, and frightful forfeits were senselessly exacted. But these were the ages of Pain. Pain, when it came, was accepted as a familiar foe. No anæsthetic robbed the hospital of all the horrors of the torture-chamber. All had to be endured, and hence—strangely enough—all might be inflicted. Yet in some ways our forerunners attached more importance to human life than we do. Although they fought duels about women and other matters of honour, instead of seeking damages from the courts, and although death sentences were more numerous in those days, they would have recoiled in lively horror from the constant wholesale butcheries of scores of thousands of persons every year by motor-cars, at which the modern world gapes unconcernedly. Their faculties for wonder and indignation had not been blunted and worn away by the catalogues of atrocities and disasters which the advantages of the electric telegraph and the newspaper press place at our disposal every morning and evening. Above all, they were not in a hurry. They made fewer speeches, and lived more meditatively and more at leisure, with companionship rather than motion for their solace. They had far fewer facilities than we have for the frittering away of thought, time, and life.

Altogether they were primitive folk, and we must make allowances for their limitations. The one trait which they shared in common with the twentieth century was the love of money, and respect and envy for its fortunate possessors. But, then, money in those days was still mainly derived from land, and the possession of land usually denoted ancient lineage.

The Convention Parliament of the Restoration was dissolved in 1660, and the so-called Cavalier, or Pensionary, Parliament met in May 1661. This was "a parliament full of lewd young men, chosen by a furious people in spite to the Puritans, whose severity had distasted them." They were "of loyal families, but young men for the most part, which being told the King, he replied that there was no great fault, for he could keep them till they got beards."[1] So in fact he did; for this Parliament continued to sit for eighteen years. In it Winston Churchill represented the constituency of Weymouth. During its first two sessions he was an active Member; he served on various committees, and as late as May 10, 1662, he was sent by the Commons to request the participation of the Lords in a joint committee to discuss questions arising out of an Army Bill.[2]

Meanwhile the Restoration settlement in Ireland was proceeding very slowly.[3] On November 30, 1660, the King had issued a declaration which had laid it down that lands in the possession of the Cromwellian settlers up to May 1659 were to be retained by them; Royalist Protestants and 'innocent' Roman Catholics were to receive restitution or compensation; Church lands were to be given back; and certain persons specially named were to be rewarded from this source for their past good services to the Royal cause. Thirty-six commissioners had been appointed to carry out this statute, and had set up an office in Dublin in May 1661. But, whether because of contradictory clauses in the Act or because, as the Irish alleged, of the interested motives of the commissioners, after nearly a year's work only one claim—that of a widow—had been settled. In April 1662 the office was closed pending the introduction into the Irish Parliament of a Bill of Settlement embodying the royal declaration. The King had himself blamed the

[1] Osmund Airy, *Charles II*, p. 177.

[2] See *Commons Journals*, viii, *passim*, and especially p. 425.

[3] The most recent account of the Restoration settlement in Ireland is to be found n R. Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts*, vol. iii (1916), chapters xli, xlii. See also E. A. Dalton, *History of Ireland* (1906), chapter xx, and J. P. Prendergast, *Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution* (1887).

commissioners for their failure to make progress in their work, and seven new commissioners were now chosen to go over to Ireland and reopen the Court of Claims. "His Majesty," wrote the Lord Chancellor Clarendon,

> made Choice of seven Gentlemen of very clear Reputations; one of them being an eminent Sergeant-at-Law whom He made a Judge upon his Return from thence; two others, Lawyers of very much Esteem; and the other four Gentlemen of very good Extractions, excellent Understandings, and above all Suspicion for their Integrity, and generally reputed to be superior to any base Temptation.[1]

Among these latter Winston Churchill, who had not been one of the thirty-six and had no interest in Irish lands, was named. He seems to have obtained this honourable post through the influence of Sir Henry Bennet, about to be created Lord Arlington and Secretary of State, under whose patronage he had first been introduced into the Court at Whitehall.[2] Winston probably sailed to Ireland to carry out his new duties in July; for there is a warrant for him to ship horses and goods thither dated July 19, 1662.[3] He took his family with him, his wife being with child. His Irish task was neither lucrative nor inspiring. His own experiences in an earlier decade had made him only too well acquainted with the dismal process of redistributing sequestered lands. Week after week crowds of tattered nobles and dispossessed landowners who sought to regain their estates from the Commission by proving their past loyalty beset the harassed tribunal. But there was little to share, and less still was bestowed.

Meanwhile the boy John for a time attended the Dublin Free Grammar School. Lord Wolseley suggests that he was frequently a witness of the proceedings of the Court of Claims, and that he learned from this dreary spectacle how scurvily loyalty is often treated, and how brazenly successful rebellion and treachery maintain themselves, even after a restoration. This again is pure surmise. A youth, by all accounts of singular beauty and address, with qualities of force and fire which were already noticeable, was growing to manhood. The grim years at Ashe House had made their mark

[1] Continuation of his *Life* (ed. 1759), p. 117.

[2] *Cf.* Sir Winston Churchill to the Earl of Arlington, April 28, 1666, Dublin: "And this my Lord I have chosen to deliver by the hands of my son [John?], that by being witness to mine he may learn his own obligations, and make his first entry into the Court (as I did) under the patronage of your Lordship's favour." (S.P. 63/320, f. 226.)

[3] *C.S.P.* (*Treasury Books*), 1660–67, p. 411.

upon his fibre. The joyous transformation which the return of the King had effected in the family fortunes, the events and spectacle of the Restoration, the Irish squalor, must all have been observed by an intelligence certainly discerning and perhaps already profound. Still, we do not think that external events played after childhood a dominating part in the development of his character. The personality unfolds with remorseless assurance, sometimes in harmony with, but as often in opposition to its environment.

Throughout 1663 Winston Churchill and his fellow-commissioners remained in Ireland. Their task was a difficult one. On March 25 they wrote to Whitehall affirming that

> Since our coming into this Kingdom, we have found so many unexpected discouragements, from those whose security and settlement was and is a powerful part of our care, that we confess we were much dejected. . . . But we have now received new life from his sacred Majesty's most gracious letters to us, by which we understand that neither our sufferings, nor our innocence, were hid from, or unconsidered by his Majesty.[1]

Nevertheless, in December Churchill begged Arlington for leave to return home for just two months,[2] so desirous was he of a rest from his labours. A month later his wish was gratified, for the King summoned him back to England on January 10, 1664,[3] and twelve days later rewarded his services with a knighthood.[4] If Winston brought his eldest son with him from Dublin on this occasion, as there is every reason to suppose, it must have been at this date that John Churchill became one of the 153 scholars of St Paul's School. His father bought a house somewhere in the City, where the fourteen-year-old boy lived while he attended school;[5] but on September 13, 1664, Winston was appointed Junior Clerk Comptroller to the Board of Green Cloth, a minor post in the royal household, and moved into Whitehall.[6]

There is no contemporary record of John Churchill at St Paul's

[1] S.P., 63/313, f. 78, partly printed in *C.S.P.* (*Ireland*), 1663-65, p. 49.

[2] S.P., 63/315, f. 42. Cf. *C.S.P.* (*Ireland*), 1666–69, p. 281.

[3] *H.M.C.*, iv, 247. This is wrongly calendared as January 10, 1662/3, instead of 1663/4, a mistake which confused Lord Wolseley.

[4] W. A. Shaw, *The Knights of England*, ii, 239.

[5] The Duchess of Marlborough to David Mallet, October 4, 1744, following the passage about St Paul's School quoted below at p. 47: "And the Duke of Marlborough . . shewed me the House where he lived." (Spencer MSS.)

[6] Wolseley, i, 22, quoting the records of the Board of Green Cloth.

School.[1] In fact, all the records of the school were destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. However, the Rev. George North, Rector of Colyton, has inscribed on p. 483 of his copy of Knight's *Life of Colet*, long preserved in the Bodleian Library and now at St Paul's School, the following note against a reference to Vegetius' *De Re Militari*:

> From this very book, John Churchill, scholar of this school, afterwards the celebrated Duke of Marlborough, first learnt the elements of the art of war, as was told to me, George North on Saint Paul's day 1724/5 by an old clergyman who said he was a contemporary scholar, was then well acquainted with him, and frequently saw him read it. This I testify to be true.
>
> G. NORTH[2]

Several of his biographers have weighed the significance of this fact, if it be true. On the one hand, it is contended that John's knowledge of Latin at that time could not have enabled him to derive any profit from the military principles expounded by Vegetius, even in so far as such principles were applicable to the conditions of eighteenth-century warfare. On the other hand, it has often been suggested that by some occult dispensation our hero was able to extract various modern sunbeams from this ancient cucumber.

About 1665 the Duchess of York was graciously pleased to offer Winston's eldest daughter, Arabella, a coveted appointment as maid of honour. Historians have inquired in wonder how a strict and faithful husband, a devoted father, and a God-fearing Anglican Cavalier could have allowed his well-loved daughter to become involved in a society in which so many pitfalls abounded. In fact he was delighted, and so was his wife, and every one whom they knew and respected hastened to congratulate the family upon an auspicious and most hopeful preferment. Who should say what honours might not flow from such propinquity to the King's brother and heir to the throne? The sanction of Divine Right descended not only on all around the sovereign, but upon all within the sacred circle of the blood royal. Power, fame, wealth, social distinction, awaited those who gained the royal favour. The association was honourable and innocent, and should any mishap occur,

[1] There is an article by R. B. Gardiner in *The Pauline* of June 1892 which assembles the printed evidence of Marlborough's presence at St Paul's School. The best evidence of this, however, is that of Marlborough's wife, quoted below at p. 47.

[2] Coxe (*Memoirs of Marlborough*, chapter i) wrongly asserts that this note is in a copy of Vegetius. The information that the note is to-day in the Walker Library of St Paul's School is from the present librarian, the Rev. I. Mavor.

Church and State stood attentive to conceal or vindicate the damage. Thus it was thought a splendid advantage for a young girl to be established at Court and take her fortune there as it came.

Arabella after some delays prospered in the Duke of York's household. Anthony Hamilton, who is famous for the authorship of Grammont's memoirs, has penned some mischievous pages from which historians diligently fail to avert their eyes.[1] There is a tale of a riding-party to a greyhound-coursing near York, and of Arabella's horse running away in a headlong gallop; of a fall and a prostrate figure on the sward; of the Royal Duke to the rescue, and of a love born of this incident. Hamilton declares that, while Arabella's face presented no more than the ordinary feminine charms, her figure was exceedingly beautiful, and that James was inflamed by the spectacle of beauty in distress and also in disarray. It is, however, certain that some time before 1668 Arabella became the mistress of the Duke of York, and that in the next seven or eight years she bore him four children, of whom the second was James Fitz-James, afterwards Duke of Berwick, Marshal of France and victor of Almanza. There is no disputing these facts, and historians may rest upon them with confidence.

Among the many stains with which John Churchill's record has been darkened stands the charge that he lightly and even cheerfully acquiesced in his sister's dishonour—or honour, as it was regarded in the moral obliquity of the age. Why did he not thus early display the qualities of a future conqueror and leader of men? Why did he not arrive hot-foot at Whitehall, challenge or even chastise the high-placed seducer, and rescue the faltering damsel from her sad plight? We must admit that all researches for any active protest upon his part have been fruitless. Nearly sixty years afterwards the old Duchess, Sarah, whose outspoken opinions have already been quoted, made her comments upon this default in terms certainly not beyond the comprehension of our own day. Writing to David Mallet about Lediard's history, she says in the letter already quoted:

> *I want to say something more than I have done in the enclosed Paper, to shew how extremely mistaken Mr Lediard was in naming the Duke of Marlborough's Sister and her Train of Bastards. Because they had Titles he seems to think that was an Honour to the Duke of Marlborough. I think it quite the contrary. For it seems to insinuate

[1] This story is to be found in C. H. Hartmann's edition of the *Memoirs*, translated by Peter Quennell (1930), pp. 285–286. Lord Wolseley says the incident took place near York.

> that his first Introduction was from an infamous Relation, when the whole Truth of that matter was as follows: His sister was a Maid of Honour to the first Dutchess of York, Hyde. She had at least two or three Bastards by the Duke of York or others, when her Brother was whipt at St Paul's School for not reading his Book. . . . Now I would fain have any Reasonable Body tell me what the Duke of Marlborough could do when a Boy at School to prevent the Infamy of his Sister, or why Mr Lediard could have any Judgment in mentioning King James's Favourite.[1]

On September 28, 1665, the King commanded the Board of Green Cloth to "dispense with the attendance of Sir Winston Churchill, one of the comptrollers of my household, he being appointed a commissioner for carrying into effect the bill for the better settlement of Ireland."[2] By the following January Sir Winston was back again in Dublin, but he had left his wife and family behind him in England. By this date his eldest son, John, had left school and had been made page to James, Duke of York. The author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* relates that James had been struck by the beauty of the boy, whom he had often seen about the Court. It may be, however, that the influence of Sir Winston's patron, the Earl of Arlington, had effected this choice. The father was well content with this: he thought it the best opening he could find for any of his sons. Shortly afterwards Arlington obtained a similar, if not so exalted, position for John's brother George, to accompany the famous Earl of Sandwich, late commander-in-chief of the Navy, to the Court of Madrid. In writing from dismal Ireland to thank the Secretary of State for this attention Sir Winston, now a civil servant, observed, "though (as times go now) it is no great preferment to be a Page, yet I am not ignorant of the benefit of disposing him (in such a Juncture of time as this) into that country where all the Boys seem Men, and all the men seem wise." And he concluded his letter by hoping that "my Sons may with equal gratitude subscribe themselves as I do," his faithful servant.[3]

Sir Winston Churchill remained in Ireland, serving upon his Commission, until 1669. He returned at intervals to London to

[1] See above, p. 45, *n.* 5.

[2] *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1664–65, p. 575.

[3] Sir Winston Churchill to the Earl of Arlington, January 13, 1666, Dublin (S.P. 63/320, f. 9). The editor of the *C.S.P.* (*Ireland*) attributes this reference in his index to John, Duke of Marlborough, but the original letter clearly says "my younger son." As John was his eldest surviving son and George his second son it seems probable that this must be George, especially as Charles, Sir Winston's third son, was only ten years old at this date. No reference is made to the appointment in any of the biographies in *D.N.B.*

fulfil his Parliamentary duties, and seems to have acted as a sort of agent at Whitehall for the other commissioners. How competent was Sir Winston in his business? The fact that his father had been a lawyer may have given him some training in adjudicating disputes, and he seems to have waded his way honestly through the stream of petitions and counter-petitions submitted to him. In 1675 one of Ormonde's correspondents informed him that Churchill had left his papers and accounts in great confusion.[1] But a curious fact is that in his administration of his duties he got into the bad books of the Duke of York. One of the chief causes that delayed the settlement was the grant which the Duke of York had been given of the Irish estates of the regicides. The Duke's rascally agents, "the worst under-instruments he could well light on," as the Lord-Lieutenant Ormonde described them, made claim after claim on the basis of this grant, and effectively prevented the commissioners from dealing with the cases of the poor and deserving. One summer's morning Sir Winston Churchill lost his temper with the Duke's agents, calling them "a pack of knaves and cheats that daily betrayed their master."

One of these agents, a certain Captain Thornhill, thereupon came to him, hoping to trap him into treason. There is a record of the conversation which throws an intimate and not unpleasing gleam of light on Winston's character.

> Having told him how much he had suffered by what he said in open Court, the Captain desired to know who he meant by "the Duke's agents"? The other hotly replied, "What! Are you come to challenge and Hector me? I meant *you*!" The other replied: "The words were 'the Duke's agents'—that it could not be he only meant me!" "No!" said Sir Winston, "I intended you and Dr Gorges—and the whole pack of you." "Sir!" said Thornhill, "Will you give me under your hand that I am a knave?" "Alas!" replied Churchill, "how long is it since you became so squeasy-stomached that you could not brook being called a knave? You shall have it under my hand," and called his man to fetch paper and ink. But the whilst the Captain took occasion to proceed in temptation, and told him Sir Jerome [?] was the Duke's chief agent. He presumed he durst not call him so. "Yes," in passion replied the Knight, "He's the chief knave, and so I can prove you all," and with that directed the Captain to the stairs, who seeing the necessity of either running down the stairs or being thrown down [beat a retreat] as the least of two evils.[2]

[1] Ormonde Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 90.

[2] For this passage see Bagwell, *op. cit.*, and the thirty-second report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records (on the Carte Papers), pp. 170–181.

His son John would perhaps already have handled the business with more discretion. The tale was speedily carried to Whitehall. When Sir Winston was in England he found some difficulty in explaining his attitude to the Duke and Duchess of York. Already on March 10, 1668, he had written, "I am quite tired out with the continual duty I am upon here having obtained no other rewards from the Duchess but to be represented to the Duke as the very greatest enemy he hath of all the Commissioners."[1] However, his reckless outspokenness did not kill his favour.

Meanwhile the annals of John are even more scanty than those of his father. Marlborough is, indeed, the last of the great commanders about whose early life practically nothing is recorded. That he was born in 1650, that he lived in his grandmother's house for nine years, that he went with his father to Dublin, that he attended St Paul's School, and that he went to Court as page to the Duke of York at about the age of sixteen and later entered the Army, sums the total of our information. We know as much of the early years of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Julius Cæsar as we do of this figure separated from us by scarcely a couple of centuries. Thereafter we enter the periods of voluminous biographies, and Frederick the Great, Wolfe, Clive, Napoleon, Wellington, Lee, Jackson, Grant, Moltke, Marshals Foch and Haig, and General Pershing offer us rich opportunities of studying military genius in its dawn.

[1] Stowe MSS., 745, f. 10.

Chapter Three

BARBARA

1667–1671

JOHN served the Duke of York as page, and, like his sister, dwelt happily in the royal household. His duties were neither onerous nor unpleasant. He had no money; but he lived in comfort and elegance. He knew all the great people of the English world, and many of its prettiest women. No one was concerned to be disagreeable to this attractive, discreet, engaging youth, who moved gaily about the corridors and anterooms of Whitehall with a deft, decided step, and never slipped or slid on those polished floors where a clumsy fall may so easily be final. He must have met about this time one of the King's pages, a young man five years his senior—Sidney Godolphin. There is a gulf between youths of sixteen and twenty-one. It soon narrowed. The two became friends; and their unbroken association runs through this story.

The Duke of York was a resolute and experienced commander. After religion the art of war claimed the foremost place in his thoughts. As Lord High Admiral he knew the service of the sea. His interest in the land forces was no less keen. It was his custom to spend a part of many days in reviewing and drilling the troops. He would frequently muster two battalions of the Guards in Hyde Park, and have them put through their elaborate exercises in his presence. His page accompanied him on these occasions. The mere operation of loading and firing the musket involved twenty-two distinct motions. The flint-lock was not yet adopted in England, and the priming of the weapon and the lighting of the matches were added to the process of loading the powder and ramming home wad and bullet. The bayonet, though invented, was not yet in use. One pikeman served as protection to two musketeers when the approach of cavalry was apprehended. Very deliberate and stately were the Royal Guards in their round beaver hats and scarlet uniforms as they performed their complicated ritual. All the evolutions to form a front in any direction, or to change into a column, or a square with the steel-helmeted pikemen at the angles, were of the same

complex order. But by the long usage of drill and discipline it was hoped that everything would be carried out faultlessly and nothing slurred over in the heart-shaking moments before a whirlwind of horsemen might fall with sabres upon ranks which, their volleys once fired, were for the time well-nigh defenceless.

At these parades the Duke of York noticed the interest of his page. He saw the boy following with gleaming eyes the warlike ceremonial. One day after a review he asked him what profession he preferred. Whereupon John fell upon his knees and demanded "a pair of colours in one of these fine regiments." The request was not denied.[1]

We are, of course, assured that this was a piece of favouritism which he owed to his sister's shame; and—somewhat inconsistently—that at the same time it made him the lifelong debtor of the Duke of York. There is no need to use these strained interpretations of what was a very ordinary transaction. It was natural enough that the son of a loyal, hard-fighting Cavalier should be received at King Charles's Court. In these youthful days John gained no office or promotion that might not have come to any young gentleman accepted there. To be made a page and afterwards an ensign was not excessive favour, nor beyond the deserts of a healthy, well-bred youth from a public school. These small appointments were suited to his years and station, and were justified on his own merits not less than on paternal claims. There is surely no need to ferret for other explanations; nor shall we join in the meticulous disputings in which some writers have indulged about whether John received his commission before or after Arabella became the Duke's mistress. The Guards gained a good recruit officer in the normal course.

Besides his sister Arabella John had a tie of kinship and acquaintance with another favourite of high importance. On the eve of his restoration Charles II met at The Hague Barbara Villiers, then newly married to Roger Palmer, afterwards Earl of Castlemaine. She became his mistress; she preceded him to England; she adorned the triumphs and enhanced for him the joys of the Restoration. She was a woman of exceeding beauty and charm, vital and passionate in an extraordinary degree. In the six years that had passed she had borne the King several children. At twenty-four, in the heyday of her success, this characteristic flower of the formidable, errant Villiers stock was the reigning beauty of the palace. She held Charles in an intense fascination. Her rages, her extravagances, her

[1] The original authority for this story is *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals.* The date of Churchill's first commission as Ensign is September 14, 1667.

infidelities seemed only to bind him more closely in her mysterious web. She was John Churchill's second cousin once removed. His mother's sister, a Mrs Godfrey, was her closest confidante. The young page, it is said,[1] was often in his aunt's apartments eating sweets, and there Barbara soon met and made friends with this good-looking boy. Very likely she had known him from his childhood. Naturally she was nice to him, and extended her powerful protection to her young and sprightly relation. Naturally, too, she aroused his schoolboy's admiration. There is not, as we shall hope to convince the reader, the slightest ground for suggesting that the beginning of their affection was not perfectly innocent and such as would normally subsist between a well-established woman of the world and her cousin, a boy of sixteen, newly arrived at the Court where she was dominant.

That Barbara was an elevating influence upon John's life, even in these early days, it is far from our purpose to contend. Says Burnet:[2]

> The ruine of his [Charles'] reign, and of all his affairs, was occasioned chiefly by his delivering himself up at his first coming over to a mad range of pleasures. One of the race of Villiers, then married to Palmer, a Papist, soon after made Earl of Castlemaine, who afterwards being separated from him was advanced to be Duchess of Cleveland, was his first and longest mistress, by whom he had five children. She was a woman of great beauty, but most enormously vitious and ravenous; foolish but imperious, very uneasy to the King, and always carrying on intrigues with other men, while yet pretending she was jealous of him. His passion for her and her strange behaviour towards him, did so disorder him, that often he was not master of himself, nor capable of minding business, which in so critical a time required great application.

More than forty years later (1709) there was published a book *The New Atlantis*, written by a certain Mrs Manley. She was a woman of disreputable character paid by the Tories to take part in the campaign of detraction which, in the intense political passion of the time, was organized against Marlborough. Swift, who to a large extent directed this vilipending, speaks of her as one of his "under spur-leathers." *The New Atlantis* is a scandalous and indecent chronicle of the Court of Charles II, conceived in the mood of the *Decameron* or the memoirs of Casanova, but without the grace and sparkle which have redeemed these works. In its scurrility and lasciviousness it goes far beyond Grammont. No names of actual

[1] *The New Atlantis* (ed. 1720), i, 31.

[2] *History of My Own Time*, i, 94.

persons are mentioned, but the identity of the characters is apparent. A sexual or corrupt motive is assigned for almost every action or transaction. The vilest aspersions are cast upon the morals of William III. Marlborough figures as "Count Fortunatus," and a filthy tale is told of his seduction at sixteen by Lady Castlemaine, and of the lavish bribes with which she kept him in her toils.

The book, which extended to four small volumes, was widely read, and passed through six editions in the ten years following its first publication. It is, apart from its malice, such a jumble of anachronisms and obvious mistakes that it was not taken seriously even by the particular kind of base public for whom such scribes cater in every age. We should not think it worth while to notice it here, but for the fact that Lord Macaulay, in his desire to insult and blacken the memory of the Duke of Marlborough, has reproduced the worst of these tales, so far as they were printable, in his famous history. He of course rejects Mrs Manley as a witness against his hero William, and dismisses her and other low-class pamphleteers in terms of blistering scorn. Yet he has incorporated these forgotten slanders about Marlborough's loves and marriage in his stately pages, and set them rolling round the world.

John was certainly a success at Court, and his favour was not diminished by his smart uniform. Still, adolescence is a trying period both for the victim and his companions. In those days there was a feeling that young men about the Court should take their turn of service with the Fleet or Army as gentlemen-volunteers. Still more was this opinion effective upon a young officer. Leave to serve abroad would readily be granted by his regiment, and all his friends and well-wishers would give their cordial approval. John found doctrine and prospect alike congenial.

Some time in 1668 he quitted the Court and sailed for Tangier. The gossip-mongers suggest that the Duchess of York herself had begun to show him undue attention: or, again, that he was getting rather old to be on such privileged terms with Lady Castlemaine. But there is no excuse for looking beyond the reasons which have been set forth. Such evidence as exists shows that his departure and prolonged absence were entirely in accordance with his own inclination. He went to Tangier, or at any rate he stayed there and in the Mediterranean for nearly three years, because he liked the life of adventure, and because the excitement of the petty warfare was refreshing after the endless glittering ceremonial of the Court.

Few youths of spirit are content at eighteen with comforts or even caresses. They seek physical fitness, movement, and the comradeship of their equals under hard conditions. They seek distinction, not favour, and exult in manly independence.

Tangier, newly acquired as the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, was the scene, then as now, of constant fighting with the Moors.[1] The House of Commons hated Tangier, and grudged its expense in speeches singularly modern. The King and his military and naval advisers—indeed, the cream of informed opinion—regarded it as far more important to the future strategy of England than had been the possession of the lately sold and lamented Dunkirk. Tangier was not only one of the gate-posts of the Mediterranean, but it was an important base for all the naval operations against the Algerian corsairs. These pirates pursued the policy of not being at peace with more than one or at most two of the European Powers at once. They preyed on the commerce of all the rest, capturing their ships and cargoes and selling the crews as slaves. As many as sixty or seventy galleys rowed by slaves sometimes harried the Mediterranean in a single year; and many were the merciless fights between them and the ships of the slowly rising Royal Navy of England. Tangier itself was a peculiar military proposition. It lived in a state of almost perpetual siege. The town was defended not only by walls, but by several lines of redoubts constructed of earth and palisades, protected by very deep ditches and held by garrisons of sometimes as many as two or three hundred men. On the desert plains between and before these strong points the Tangier Horse paraded in constant presence of the enemy cavalry, and on occasion sallied out upon them at the charge.

We cannot fix with exactness the period in which John Churchill served at Tangier. There is, indeed, no contemporary evidence of his ever having been there. The episode is ignored in *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*. There is, however, a circumstantial account in Lediard (1733), sixty years after the event had occurred, of his being attached to the Tangier garrison. This has been freely accepted by all Marlborough's biographers, notably by Coxe, and perhaps receives some confirmation from Marlborough's letter to his wife of June 26, 1707,[1] in which he says:

> The weather is so very hot and the dust so very great that I have this hour to myself, the officers not caring to be abroad till the hour of

[1] *Cf.* E. M. G. Routh, *Tangier* (1912).

[1] Printed in Coxe, chapter lviii.

orders obliges them to it. It is most certain that *when I was in Spain, in the month of August*, I was not more sensible of the heat than I am at this minute.

There is little doubt that Marlborough considered Tangier 'Spain.' If the story of his presence at Tangier is true, when was he there and for how long? It cannot have been earlier than September 1667, when he received his "pair of colours"; nor can it be later than the February of 1671, when he fought a duel in London. We may therefore assume that his service in Tangier covered the years 1668 to 1670.

He seems to have lived from eighteen to twenty the rough, carefree life of a subaltern officer engaged in an endless frontier guerrilla. That the conditions were by no means intolerable is shown by the following letter, written from Madrid in March 1670 to the Earl of Arlington by the Earl of Castlemaine, on his way back from Tangier:

> ★At my arrival, I was never so surprized than to find so many officers so very well clad and fashioned that though I have been in most of the best garrisons of Europe I do not remember I ever yet saw the like, and which added to my admiration was that though necessaries are a great deal dearer, and all superfluities there four times the value of what they are in England, yet the Generality both of our Commanders and Soldiers lay up something, which argues much industry. . . .
>
> For the Town itself (if the Mole be made) all the world sees it will, as it were, command the Mediterranean, by stopping its mouth; how quick a receipt it is for the Merchants with[in] any War with Spain, what a Bridle it will be of the Pirates of Barbary, as a Constant place of our own, for our men of War, with opportunities also of revictualling and fitting as if we were at home; which bears now no small proportion with the expense of an expedition; neither is it a little honour to the Crown to have a Nursery of its own for soldiers, without being altogether beholding to our Neighbours for their Education and breeding.[1]

On the very day this letter was written there was signed also one of those infrequent contemporary documents which give us facts in Marlborough's youthful history. A Signet Office order of Charles II dated March 21, 1670, of which there are three copies in the Record Office,[2] runs as follows:

> ★Right trustie and Wellbeloved Counsellors, Wee greete you well. Whereas wee are informed that there is due unto Our trustie & Wellbeloved Servant Sr Winston Churchill Knt (late of Our Commissioners

[1] S.P., 94/56, ff. 94–94 v.

[2] S.P., Signet Office, vii, 195, and S.P., 63/327, ff. 54–55.

for ye Settlement of Our Kingdome of Ireland) an Arreare for his allowance for dyett and lodging whilst he was in Our service there amounting unto ye Summe of One hundred & forty pounds. And it having been represented to Us in favour of John Churchill sonne of ye sd Sr Winston that ye said summe so in arreare hath been bestowed upon him by his father for & towards his equippage & other expenses in ye employment he is now forthwith by our command to undertake on board ye Fleet in ye Mediterranean Seas.

Wee being graciously willing to give all due encouragement to ye forwardness & early affečons of ye sd John Churchill to our Service as also in justification of what is due to ye said Sr Winston Churchill as aforesaid have thought fitt hereby to Signifie Our pleasure to you accordingly. Our Will & pleasure is that immediately after your Receipt of these Our L(ett)ers you issue out & pay unto the said Sr Winston Churchill or his Assignes, Out of any our Treasure now in Yo(ur) hands the said Summe of One hundred & forty pounds in full satisfacon of the said Arrears so due from us aforesaid. (All prohibitions notwithstanding) wherewith Wee are graciously pleased in p̃ticular bounty to the said John Churchill upon this occasion to dispense.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this warrant. The English fleet in the Mediterranean was in 1670 engaged in an intermittent blockade of Algiers. Sir Thomas Allin was setting out with a squadron of fourteen ships to renew his blockade. An Admiralty regiment, or, as we should say, a 'Naval Brigade' or Division, was being recruited and embarked as marines for the operation. It seems certain that John obtained permission to exchange his service of the land for that of the sea, and was attached to the Algiers expedition of 1670. Whether he came home to England beforehand, or whether, as is possible, he joined the squadron when it or part of it called at Tangier, is uncertain. We know that he required an outfit for the campaign and that his father bought it for him. The warrant clearly shows that both father and son had very little money at this time. If John then had been Lady Castlemaine's lover, and if the tales of his early subornation by her were true, so modest a sum as £140 would surely not have been a difficulty sufficient to be brought to the compassion of the King. It is also obvious from the terms of the warrant that he was not out of favour with the King. Charles II was going bankrupt in 1670, and the phrase "all prohibitions notwithstanding" shows that this sum of £140 was specially exempted from what was no doubt an almost general moratorium of cash payments from the Royal Exchequer.

The conclusions which we base upon this document—hitherto

strangely unnoticed by historians—are confirmed by the significant negative evidence of Pepys. His *Diary* contains the fullest accounts of the fashionable scandals of the Court of Charles II. Nothing seems to be missed. He had as good opportunities as anyone else of knowing about such affairs. It is inconceivable that a notorious and outrageous intrigue between the Duke of York's page and the King's mistress, about which all tongues were wagging, should not have been recorded by him. But his voluble, engaging *Diary* is dumb on this subject. It stops short in May 1669, and a few years later Pepys began his great career as manager and virtual master of the Admiralty, about which few have ever troubled to read. Evidently before that date no whisper had reached his attentive ears.

John's experiences with the fleet are unrecorded. All we know is that in August 1670 Admiral Allin defeated a number of Algerian corsairs, and was afterwards relieved of his command. Surveying all the facts we have been able to marshal, we may accept the following conclusions: that Churchill, still penniless and heart-whole, quitted the Court in 1668, that he served at Tangier till 1670, that early in that year he sailed with the fleet against the pirates, and served for some months in the Mediterranean. Eagerly seeking adventure by land or sea, he pulled all the strings he could to convey him to the scenes of action, and his zeal was noticed and well regarded in the highest circles.

So far all is well, and the conduct of our hero will command general approbation. We now approach a phase upon which the judgment of individuals and periods will vary. In all his journey Marlborough found two, and only two, love-romances. Two women, both extraordinary beings, both imperious, tempestuous personalities, both well-known historical figures, are woven successively into his life. Here and now the first appears. We have already made her acquaintance.

At the beginning of 1671 John Churchill, grown a man, bronzed by African sunshine, close-knit by active service and tempered by discipline and danger, arrived home from the Mediterranean. He seems to have been welcomed with widespread pleasure by the Court, and by none more than by Barbara, now become Duchess of Cleveland. She was twenty-nine and he twenty. They were already affectionate friends. The distant degree of cousinly kinship which had hitherto united them had sanctioned intimacy, and did not now prohibit passion. Affections, affinities, and attractions were com-

bined. Desire walked with opportunity, and neither was denied. John almost immediately became her lover, and for more than three years this wanton and joyous couple shared pleasures and hazards. The cynical, promiscuous, sagacious-indulgent sovereign was outwitted or outfaced. Churchill was almost certainly the father of Barbara's last child,[1] a daughter, born on July 16, 1672, and the ties between them were not severed until the dawn of his love for Sarah Jennings in 1675.

It is an exaggeration to speak of Churchill as "rivalling the King in his nearest affection." After ten years Charles II was already tiring of the tantrums and divagations of the Duchess of Cleveland, and other attractions made their power felt. From 1671 onward the bonds which were to bind the King and the Duchess were their children, most of whom were undoubtedly his own. None the less, the intimacy of John and Barbara continued to cause Charles repeated annoyance, and their illicit loves, their adventures and escapades, were among the most eminent scandals of the English Court at this period.

We have two indications of John's whereabouts during this year.[2]

News-letter from London

February 6, 1671

Yesterday was a duel between Mr Fenwick and Mr Churchill esquires who had for their seconds Mr Harpe and Mr Newport, son to my Lord Newport; it ended with some wounds for Mr Churchill, but no danger of life.

And again

Sir Christopher Lyttelton to Lord Hatton

LANDGUARD
August 21, 1671

I have y[e] Lordships of Aug[st] 3d, in w[ch] you give mee a worse account of Mr Bruce then by y[r] former, and for w[ch] I think you could not be too severe with him. His captaine has not had much better luck at home, for hee has bine lately engaged in a rencounter with young Churchill. I know not y[e] quarrel; but Herbert rann Churchill twice through the arme, and Churchill him into y[e] thigh, and, after, Herbert disarmed him. But w[ht] is y[e] worse, I heare y[t] Churchill has so spoke of it, that the King and Duke are angry wth Herbert. I know not w[ht] he has done to justifie himself.

[1] *Cf.* G. S. Steinmann, *Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland*, p. 235, quoting Abel Boyer, *Annals*.

[2] *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1671, p. 71. *Hatton Correspondence* (Camden Society), i, 66.

Two of the adventures of the lovers are well known. The first that, being surprised by Charles in the Duchess's bedroom, John saved her honour—or what remained of it—by jumping from the window, a considerable height, into the courtyard below. For this feat, delighted at his daring and address, she presented him with £5000.[1]

The second anecdote is attributed to the French Ambassador, Barillon. The Duke of Buckingham, he says, gave a hundred guineas to one of his waiting-women to be well informed of the intrigue. He knew that Churchill would be one evening at a certain hour in Barbara's apartments. He brought the King to the spot. The lover was hidden in the Duchess's cupboard (she was not Duchess till 1670). After having prowled about the chamber the King, much upset, asked for sweets and liqueurs. His mistress declared that the key of the cupboard was lost. The King replied that he would break down the door. On this she opened the door, and fell on her knees on one side while Churchill, discovered, knelt on the other. The King said to Churchill, "Go; you are a rascal, but I forgive you because you do it to get your bread."[2]

It is a good story, and the double-barrelled insult is very characteristic of Charles. But is it true? Barillon, who did not himself arrive in England till September 1677, probably got it from his predecessor, Courtin. He fixes the date as 1667. Burnet's story belongs to 1670. Here is a fine exposure of these gossips. There can be little doubt, as we have shown, that nothing of this kind can have occurred before 1671. It is therefore one of those good stories invented long afterwards and fastened, as so many are, on well-known figures.[3]

We are on much firmer ground when we come to money matters. The famous Lord Halifax in the intervals of statecraft conducted a rudimentary form of life insurance. The rates were attractive, for the lives of young gallants and soldiers—the prey of wars, duels, adventures, and disease—were precarious. At twenty-four John purchased from Lord Halifax for £4500 an annuity of £500 a year for life. It was a profitable investment. He enjoyed its fruits for nearly fifty years. It was the foundation of his immense fortune. Where did the money come from? No one can suggest any other

[1] Burnet (i, 475) describes this episode, but does not name Churchill. *Cf.* Chesterfield's *Letters*, i, 136, and *The New Atlantis*, i, 21, *seq.*

[2] *Correspondence politique*, *Angleterre*, t. 137, f. 404.

[3] It may well be that these two stories are one, and that untrue.

source than Barbara. Was this, then, the £5000 that she had given him when he leaped from the window, and if so what are we to think of the transaction? Some of Marlborough's defenders have disputed the facts. They point to the scanty evidence—contemporary gossip and a passing reference in one of Lord Chesterfield's letters. The Blenheim papers contain the actual receipt, which, since it has not seen the light of day for more than two hundred and fifty years, we present in facsimile opposite page 62.

The code of the seventeenth century did not regard a man's taking money from a rich mistress as necessarily an offence against honour. It was no more a bar to social success and worldly regard than are marriages for money in these modern times. But every one has been struck by the judicious foresight of the investment. Moralists have been shocked by the fact that John did not squander Barbara's gift in riotous living. Cards, wine, and other women would seem to be regarded by these logicians as more appropriate channels for the use of such funds. They treat the transaction as the aggravation of an infamy. It may well be true that no other man of twenty-four then alive in England would have turned this money into an income which secured him a modest but lifelong independence. The dream of poverty inculcated in his early days at Ashe may be the explanation. It may be that Barbara, knowing his haunting prepossession, resolved to free him from it, and that an annuity was the prescribed purpose of the gift. However this may be, there is the bond.

It is curious to see how the whole episode has been judged in different generations. Lediard gloated as eagerly as Lord Macaulay upon *The New Atlantis*, and like him extracted and adopted the spicy bits. But Lediard had a different object. Writing in 1733, he dwells with gusto upon these exploits and evidently thinks that they redound to the credit of his hero.[1]

> To relate all the Atchievements of our young Adventurer in the Cause of Venus, which were the Amusement of the Beau Mond, and furnish'd Matter of Discourse for the Gallant Assemblies of those jovial Days, would carry me too far from the main Design of this Work.

Therewith he yields himself to the temptation with an appetite which sharpens as it feeds:

> It was said, in those Times, that the handsomest of King Charles's Mistresses, being importuned, by a Gentleman of more Fortune than

[1] *Life of John, Duke of Marlborough*, i, 28–29.

Discretion, to bestow the last Favour upon him; She agreed to let him enjoy what he was so sollicitous for, at the moderate Expence of £10,000 for one Night. This the enamour'd Fool paid down; But, thinking to heighten the Pleasures of Venus, by those of Bacchus, took so large a Portion of the latter's Favour, that when the happy Hour came, he was not in a Capacity, to take Possession of the Jewel he had so dearly purchas'd. The Gallant, having met with this Disappointment thought the Lady would be too conscientious not to admit him, a second Time, to her Favours, when able to enjoy them, for the same Fee; But she had the Modesty to insist on a new Bargain, and the same Sum over again. Surprized at the unreasonable Demand, Rage took Place of the Passion of Love, and the Gentleman, in a Fury, left her to satiate her Inclination for a more amiable Person, then justly call'd the Handsomest and most Agreable Cavalier at Court. To him she gave the entire Sum left her by her Cully, as a Token of her future Favour, which he took better Care to deserve, and is supposed in the Sequel, to have had so large a Share of, as, in some Measure, laid the Foundation of his Fortune.

He proceeds to reinforce this scandalous narration by quoting Pope's imitation of Horace, written thirty years later:

> Not so, who of Ten Thousand gull'd her Knight,
> Then ask'd Ten Thousand for a second Night;
> The Gallant too, to whom she paid it down,
> Liv'd to refuse that Mistress half a Crown.

It must have cost Macaulay a pang to reject, as he does, this culminating calumny. It fitted so well the scenario he had set himself to prepare. It was exactly the feature he required for his villain. But the fact that the Duchess of Cleveland died a wealthy woman and was never in want of money, still less of half a crown, was an obstacle which even his enthusiasm could not surmount. So he put it aside, and paraded his sacrifice as an evidence of his sense of justice and responsibility.

Archdeacon Coxe, writing in 1819, deals far more decorously with the matter:

So handsome and accomplished an officer could not fail to be entangled in the gallantries of a dissipated court. But we spare the reader the detail of these irregularities, which are doubtless exaggerated by the licentious pens of that and subsequent times. We shall barely advert to an anecdote which has obtained credit relative to a connexion with the duchess of Cleveland, whom he is accused of treating afterwards with the basest ingratitude. The falsity of this tale

1674

Know all persons by these presents that I George Lord Viscount Halyfax Have on or before the day of the Date of these presents received and had of John Churchill Esq. Sonne and heire apparent of Sr Winston Churchill of Greate Mintorne in the County of Dorsett knight the Summe of ffoure Thousand and ffive hundred pounds of lawfull money of England being the Consideracon money of (and mencioned to bee paid to mee by the said John Churchill in and by) one paire of Indentures bearinge even date with these presents and made or mencioned to bee made betweene mee the said Viscount Halyfax of the one part And the said John Churchill of the other part off and from which said Summe of ffoure Thousand and ffive hundred pounds I the said George Viscount Halyfax Doe hereby release and discharge the said John Churchill his heires Executors and Administrators for ever by these presents In witnes whereof I the said George Lord Viscount Halyfax have hereunto Sett my hand & Seale the twentieth day of Aprill One Thousand Six hundred Seaventy and ffoure.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of
H. Coventry
John Trimer
John Bird
Arnold Smith

Halifax

LORD HALIFAX'S RECEIPT

Blenheim MSS.

will be sufficiently shown by the observation that it is originally drawn from so impure and questionable a source as *The New Atlantis.* Admitting, however, that Colonel Churchill might have experienced the liberality of the duchess, we need not seek for the cause in an intercourse of gallantry, since he had a strong claim to her protection from affinity, being nearly related to her on the side of his mother, who was her cousin.

Whatever may have been the conduct of Colonel Churchill during the fervour of youth, and amidst the temptations of a dissolute court, his irregularities soon yielded to the influence of a purer passion, which recalled him from licentious connexions, and gave a colour to his future life.[1]

It was reserved for Macaulay, writing in 1858 in the pristine vigour of Victorian propriety, to add a lurid colour to this already sharply defined woodcut. "He was," says Macaulay, "thrifty in his very vices, and levied ample contributions on ladies enriched by the spoils of more liberal lovers." "He was kept by the most profuse, imperious, and shameless of harlots." "He subsisted upon the infamous wages bestowed upon him by the Duchess of Cleveland." He was "insatiable of riches." He was "one of the few who have in the bloom of youth loved lucre more than wine or women, and who have, at the height of greatness, loved lucre more than power or fame." "All the precious gifts which nature had lavished upon him he valued chiefly for what they would fetch." "At twenty he made money of his beauty and his vigour; at sixty he made money of his genius and glory."[2]

Charles Bradlaugh, another hostile historian, under some provocation from Lord Randolph Churchill, who had described his constituents as "the dregs of the gutter," developed these themes in the eighties with somewhat more restraint.[3]

Macaulay's taunts did not go unanswered. In 1864 a writer of extraordinary power, but hardly ever read, published a book, long out of print, the staple of which is a series of essays particularly challenging not only the accuracy, but the good faith of the famous historian. "Paget's Examen" sums up the story of Churchill's youth with a knowledge, justice, and force which are insurpassable.

Plunged at a very early age into the dissipations of the Court of Charles II, his remarkably handsome person and his engaging manners soon attracted notice. For the loathsome imputation cast

[1] i, 20–21.
[2] *History*, i, 460–462; iii, 437–438.
[3] C. Bradlaugh, *John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough* (1884).

upon him by Lord Macaulay, that he availed himself of these advantages for the purposes which he intimates—that he bore to the wealthy and licentious ladies of the Court the relation which Tom Jones did to Lady Bellaston—we can discover no foundation even in the scandalous chronicles of those scandalous days. That he did not bring to the Court of Charles the virtue which made the overseer of Potiphar's household famous in that of Pharoah, must be freely admitted. The circumstances of his intrigue with the Duchess of Cleveland are recorded in the pages of Grammont. Never, says Hamilton, were her charms in greater perfection than when she cast her eyes on the young officer of the Guards. That Churchill, in the bloom of youth, should be insensible to the passion which he had awakened in the breast of the most beautiful woman of that voluptuous Court, was hardly to be expected. He incurred, in consequence, the displeasure of the King, who forbade him the Court. Far be it from us to be the advocates of lax morality; but Churchill must be judged by the standard of the day. He corrupted no innocence; he invaded no domestic peace. The Duchess of Cleveland was not only the most beautiful, but she was also the most licentious and the most inconstant of women. From the King down to Jacob Hall she dispensed her favours according to the passion or the fancy of the moment. She was as liberal of her purse as of her person, and Marlborough, a needy and handsome ensign, no doubt shared both. But it is a mere misuse of language to charge Churchill with receiving "infamous wages" or to say that he was "kept by the most profuse, imperious, and shameless of harlots" because he entertained a daring and successful passion for the beautiful mistress of the King.[1]

Between these various accounts the reader must choose according to his temperament and inclination. We have presented the facts, edifying or otherwise, as they are known. They can best be judged in the war-time setting which further chapters afford.

[1] J. Paget, *The New "Examen,"* No. I, "Lord Macaulay and the Duke of Marlborough" (1861), reprinted in *Paradoxes and Puzzles* (1874).

Chapter Four

THE EUROPE OF CHARLES II

1667–1672

IT is fitting to turn from the scraps and oddities which, pieced together, form our only record of Churchill's youth to survey the vast, stately European scene wherein he now began to move and was one day to shine.

The supreme fact upon the Continent in the latter half of the seventeenth century was the might of France. Her civil wars were over. All internal divisions had been effaced, and Louis XIV reigned over a united nation of eighteen or nineteen million souls possessed of the fairest region on the globe. Feudalism, with its local warriors and their armed retainers, had at length been blown away by gunpowder, and, as wars were frequent, standing armies had arisen in all the states of Europe. The possession of organized regular troops, paid, disciplined, trained by the central Government, was the aim of all the rulers, and in the main the measure of their power. This process had in the course of a few generations obliterated or reduced to mere archaic survivals the Parliamentary and municipal institutions of France. In different ways similar effects had followed the same process in other Continental countries. Everywhere sovereignty had advanced with giant strides. The peoples of Europe passed out of a long confusion into an age of autocracies in full panoply against all foes from within or from without.

But for the storm-whipped seas which lapped the British islands, our fortunes would have followed the road upon which our neighbours had started. England had not, however, the same compulsive need for a standing army as the land powers. She stood aloof, moving slowly and lagging behind the martial throng. In the happy nick of time her Parliament grew strong enough to curb the royal power and to control the armed forces, and she thus became the cradle, as she is still the citadel, of free institutions throughout the world.

There she lay, small, weak, divided, and almost unarmed. The essence of her domestic struggle forbade a standing army. Scotland

and Ireland lay, heavy embarrassments and burdens, on her shoulders or at her flank. Although there was much diffused well-being throughout the country, very little money could be gathered by the State. Here again the conditions of the internal struggle kept the executive weak. The whole population of England—their strength thus latent and depressed, their energies dispersed, their aim unfocused—attained little more than five millions.

Yet upon the other side of the Channel, only twenty-one miles across the dancing waves, rose the magnificent structure of the French monarchy and society. One hundred and forty thousand soldiers in permanent pay, under lifelong professional officers, constituted the peace-time force of France. Brilliant, now famous, captains of war or fortification, Turenne, Condé, Vauban; master organizers like Louvois; trainers like Martinet (his name a household word)—forged or wielded this splendid instrument of power. Adroit, sagacious, experienced Foreign Ministers and diplomatists urged the march of French aggrandizement. Financiers and trade Ministers as wise and instructed as Colbert reached out for colonies bound by exclusive commercial dealings, or consolidated the expanding finances of the most modern, the most civilized, and the strongest society.

Nor were the glories of France confined to the material sphere. The arts flourished in a long summer. In the latter half of the century French was becoming not only the universal language of diplomacy outside the Holy Roman Empire, but also that of polite society and even of literature. The French drama was performed and French poetry read, the names of Molière, Racine, Boileau were honoured, throughout the cultured cities of the world. French styles of architecture, of painting, even of music, were imitated in every Court in Germany. Even the Dutch, who were contributing notably to the progress of civilization in the financial, industrial, and domestic arts, accused themselves under William of Orange of being "debauched by French habits and customs."[1] French Court theologians, their wits sharpened first by the Jansenist and secondly by the Gallican controversy, rivalled those of Rome. French Catholicism, adorned by figures like Fénelon or Bossuet, was the most stately, imposing, and persuasive form of the Old Faith which had yet confronted the Reformation. The conquest, planned and largely effected, was not only military and economic, but religious, moral, and intellectual. It was the most magnificent claim to world

[1] P. Blok, *History of the People of the Netherlands*, vol. iv, chapters xii, xix.

dominion ever made since the age of the Antonines. And at the summit there reigned in unchallenged splendour for more than half a century a masterful, competent, insatiable, hard-working egoist, born to a throne.

Since the days of Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada Spain had been the bugbear of Protestant England. Many devout families, suffering all things, still adhered to the Catholic faith. But deep in the hearts of the English people from peer to peasant memories of Smithfield burned with a fierce glow which any breeze could rouse into flame. And now Spain was in decrepitude, insolvent, incoherent, tracing her genealogies and telling her beads. Her redoubtable infantry, first conquered nearly thirty years ago by Condé at Rocroi, had vanished. In their place, alike in the Spanish Netherlands, which we now know as Belgium and Luxembourg, and in the New World, stood decaying garrisons, the mockery of soldiers. The Spanish harbours were filled with rotting ships; the Spanish treasury was bare. The once-proud empire of Charles V, irreparably exhausted by over a century of almost continuous war, had fallen a victim to religious mania. Layer upon layer of superstition and ceremonial encrusted the symbols of departed power. Cruelties ever more fantastic enforced a dwindling and crumbling authority. There remained an immense pride, an ancient and secure aristocracy, the title-deeds of half the outer world, a despotic Church, and a throne occupied by a sickly, sterile child who might die any day, leaving no trace behind.

Gradually the fear of Spain had faded from the English mind. In Oliver Cromwell, a man of conservative temperament, born under Queen Elizabeth, the old prejudice obstinately survived. But when, in 1654, he proposed to join France in war against Spain, his council of Roundhead generals surprised him by their resistance. Left to themselves, they would probably have taken the opposite side. The authority of the Lord Protector prevailed, and his Ironside redcoats stormed the Spanish positions upon the sand-dunes by Dunkirk. Wide circles of instructed English opinion regarded these antagonisms as old-fashioned and obsolete. To them the new menace to English faith, freedom, and trade was France. This Battle of the Dunes marked the end of the hundred years' struggle with Spain. Henceforth the dangers and difficulties of England would not arise from Spanish strength, but from Spanish weakness. Henceforth the mounting power of France would be the main preoccupation of Englishmen.

Nearest akin in race, religion, and temperament to the English, the Dutch were their sharpest rivals upon the seas, in trade and colonization. It is said that at this time one-half of the population of Holland gained their livelihood from commerce, industry, and shipping.[1] A tough, substantial race, welded by their struggles against Spanish tyranny, dwelling, robust and acquisitive, under embattled oligarchies, the Dutch clashed with the English at many points. There was the Dutch navy, with its memories of Tromp and his broom "to sweep the English from the seas." There were the dangers of Dutch competition in the colonies and in trade as far as the coasts of India, in the East, and as far as New Amsterdam—in 1664 renamed New York—across the Atlantic. Thus the war which Cromwell had waged against Holland had broken out again in the earlier years of Charles II. Its course was ignominious to England. The sailors of the Royal Navy were in those days paid only at the end of a three or four years' commission. The crews who came home in 1666 received their pay warrants, called tickets, for three years' hard service. Such was the poverty of the Crown that when these were presented at the Naval Pay Office no payment could be made. Conceiving themselves intolerably defrauded, some of the sailors committed an unpardonable crime. They made their way to Holland and piloted the Dutch fleet through the intricate approaches of the Thames estuary.[2] Several of the laid-up English ships in the Medway and the Thames were burned, and the rumble of the Dutch guns was plainly heard in London. But the lack of money forbade effectual reprisals. Charles and his subjects swallowed the insult, and peace was made in 1667. A great bitterness continued between the countries, and the claim of England to the unquestioned sovereignty of the Narrow Seas, though recognized by the peace treaty, accorded ill with the actual incidents of the naval war. "With the Treaty of Breda," says the historian of the united Netherlands,[3] "began the most glorious period of the Republic."

The relations between England and Holland followed a chequered course, and many years were to pass before their grievous quarrels about trade and naval supremacy were finally thrust into the background before the ever-growing French power. It is easy nowadays to say that Charles "should have marched with the Dutch and

[1] De la Court, *Political Maxims of the State of Holland*.

[2] Callender, *The Naval Side of British History*, pp. 116, 117.

[3] P. Blok, *op. cit.*

fought the French" or "marched with the Protestants and fought the Papists." But the Dutch attitude was oblique and baffling, and many great Catholic states were opposed to France. Holland was then ruled by John de Witt and his brother Cornelius. The De Witts were friendly to France. John de Witt believed that by astute conciliation he could come to terms with Louis XIV. Louis had always a potent bribe for the Dutch in the carrying trade of France, on which they thrived. Had not France been the friend, and even champion, of the Republic during its birth-throes? And what was Belgium, that fief of Spain, but a convenient, useful buffer-state whose partition, if inevitable, offered large, immediate gains to both its neighbours. There were, indeed, two Hollands—the pacific, and at times the Francophile, Holland of John de Witt and Amsterdam, and the Holland which adhered to the memory and lineage of William the Silent, and saw in his frail, spirited, already remarkable descendant the prince who would sustain its cause. No Government, French or English, could tell which of these Hollands would be supreme in any given situation.

These uncertainties arose in part from the dubious, balancing attitude of what we now call Prussia. The Great Elector of Brandenburg ruled the main northern mass of Protestant Germany. But upon his western bounds along the whole course of the Rhine, and stretching southward to Bavaria and the Danube, lay a belt of powerful minor states, partly Protestant, partly Catholic in sympathy, whose accession to the one side or the other might be decisive in the balance of power. Beyond Prussia, again, lay Poland, a large, unkempt, slatternly kingdom, ranging from the Baltic to the Ukraine, still partly in feudalism, with an elective monarchy, the trophy of foreign intrigue, and a constitution which might have been designed for a cauldron of domestic broil. "Ceaselessly gnawed by aristocratic lawlessness,"[1] its throne a prey to all the princes and adventurers of Europe, its frontiers ravaged, its magnates bribed, Poland was the sport of Europe. There was to be an interlude of glorious independence under John Sobieski; but for the rest Louis XIV, the Emperor, and the Great Elector tirelessly spun their rival webs about the threatened state, and with each candidature for its throne put their competing influences to the test. No wonder the Great Elector, until a final phase which we shall presently reach, had to follow an equivocal policy.

On the eastern flank of Poland lay the huge, sprawling Muscovy

[1] R. Nisbet Bain, *Slavonic Europe.*

Empire, until recent times called Russia, still almost barbarous and perpetually torn by the revolt of the Cossacks against the Tsar. Moscow was ravaged by the Cossack Hetman Stenka, who also brought "unspeakable horrors" upon an "oppressed peasantry."[1] The possibilities of contact with Western civilization were blocked by Sweden and Poland, which together also impeded Russia from any outlet on to the Baltic. In the south the Turks shut it out from the Black Sea. The Tsar Alexis (1645–76), a peace-loving and conscientious man, entrusted a reforming patriarch, the monk Nikon, with most of the affairs of State during the early part of his reign. Later, in 1671, Stenka was captured and quartered alive, and, when Alexis died, although no one yet foresaw the emergence of these eastern barbarians as a Western Power, the way lay open for the work of Peter the Great.

In the north of Europe Sweden, the ancient rival of Denmark, was the strongest Power, and aimed at making the Baltic a Swedish lake. At this time the Swedish realm included Finland, Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia, and West Pomerania; and the house of Vasa had traditional designs on Denmark and parts of Poland. The hardy, valiant race of Swedes had impressed upon all Europe the startling effects of a well-trained, warlike professional army. For a spell in the Thirty Years War Gustavus Adolphus had overthrown the troops of every Central European state. But Gustavus and his victories now lay in the past. The chief desire of Prussia was to win Pomerania from the Swedish Crown. Soon, in the battle of Fehrbellin (1675), the Great Elector with his Prussian troops was to overthrow the famous army of Sweden. The antagonism between the two countries was keen and open. Only the unfailing strength of France saved Pomerania for a time from Prussian absorption. Although the bias of Sweden was towards Protestantism, no Dutch or German statesman in the last quarter of the seventeenth century could ever exclude the possibility that her doughty soldiery would be bought by France, or rallied to her cause. All these baffling potential reactions were well comprehended at Whitehall in the closet of King Charles II.

Continuing our progress, we reach the domains of the Holy Roman Empire. This organism of Central Europe, "the survival of a great tradition and a grandiose title,"[2] signified not territory but only a sense of membership. The member states covered roughly

[1] R. Nisbet Bain, *op. cit.*, for this paragraph.
[2] *The Cambridge Modern History*, v, 338.

modern Germany, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, and Belgium. The ruler was chosen for life by the Electors of seven (after the Treaty of Westphalia eight) states. The Hapsburgs, as sovereigns of Austria, laying claim to Silesia, Bohemia, and Hungary, were the most powerful candidates, and in practice became the hereditary bearers of the ceremonial office of Emperor.[1]

Austria proper and the Hapsburg dynasty were deeply Catholic; not violent, aggressive, or, except in Hungary, proselytizing, but dwelling solidly and sedately in spiritual loyalty to the Pope. Then, as in our own age, the Hapsburgs were represented by a sovereign who reigned for fifty troublous years over an empire already racked by the stresses which two centuries later were, amid world disaster, to rend it in pieces. Confronted and alarmed by the growing power and encroachments of France, at variance often with Prussia, Vienna had fearful preoccupations of its own. The Turk under fanatical Sultans still launched in the south-east of Europe that thrust of conquest which in earlier periods had been successively hurled back from France and Spain. At any time the Ottoman armies, drawing recruits and supplies from all those subjugated Christian peoples we now call the Balkan States, might present themselves in barbaric invasion at the gates of Vienna. And there were always the Magyars of Hungary, always in revolt. In general, the divided princes of Germany faced the united strength of France, and Austria struggled for life against the Turk; but the whole vague confederacy recognized common dangers and foes, and the majestic antagonisms of Bourbons and Hapsburgs were the main dividing line of Europe.

Italy in the seventeenth century was merely a geographical expression. In the north Savoy (Piedmont) was brought out of its obscurity at the beginning of the century by the genius of Charles Emmanuel I (1580–1630). Afterwards it poised precariously between France and the Empire, deserting them both in turn according to the apparent fortunes of war. It has been said that the geographical position of Savoy, "the doorkeeper of the Alps," made its rulers treacherous. At best they could only preserve themselves and their country from ruin by miracles of diplomatic alternation.

Such were the unpromising and divided components of a Europe in contrast with which the power and ambitions of France arose in menacing splendour. Such were the factors and forces amid which Charles II had to steer the fortunes of his kingdom.

[1] In this account we shall use 'the Empire,' 'Austria,' and 'the Court at Vienna' as more or less interchangeable terms.

The nineteenth-century historians, writing mainly in the triumphant serenity of the Victorian era, did not make proper allowance for the weak and precarious plight of our country in the period with which we are now concerned. They thought it sufficient to set forth the kind of policy which the opinion of their day would approve, and they judged severely every divergence from it. Particularly they inculcated the virtues of strong, plain, straightforward conduct, and pointed their censure upon deceit, intrigue, vacillation, double-dealing, and bad faith. Upon this there must, of course, be general agreement. It would have been possible for England in 1660 to take a more dignified course through all her perils and to solve the problems of Europe, if only she had at that time possessed the relative power and resources she commanded two centuries later.

The politics of a weak and threatened state cannot achieve the standards open to those who enjoy security and wealth. The ever-changing forms of the dangers by which they are oppressed impose continuous shifts and contradictions, and many manœuvres from which pride and virtue alike recoil. England in the seventeenth century was little better placed than were Balkan states like Roumania or Bulgaria, when in the advent or convulsion of Armageddon they found themselves bid for or struck at by several mighty empires. We had to keep ourselves alive and free, and we did so. It is by no means sure that plain, honest, downright policies, however laudable, would have succeeded. The oak may butt the storm, but the reeds bow and quiver in the gale and also survive.

It is a mistake to judge English foreign policy from 1667 to 1670, from the Triple Alliance with Holland against France to the Secret Treaty of Dover with France against Holland, as if it meant simply alternating periods of good and evil, of light and darkness, and of the influence of Sir William Temple as against that of the Duchess of Orleans. In fact, both the problems and the controls were continuous and the same, and our policy rested throughout in the same hands, in those of Charles II and his Minister Arlington. Although devoid of both faith and illusions, they were certainly not unintelligent, nor entirely without patriotic feeling. The invasion of Belgium by Louis XIV in the late summer of 1667 confronted them both with a situation of the utmost perplexity. At this stage in his life, at any rate, Charles desired to play an independent part in Europe, while Arlington, with his Spanish sympathies and training and his Dutch wife, was positively anti-French. Their first impulse was to resist the invasion of Belgium.

Strange indeed why this patch of land should exercise such compelling influence upon our unsophisticated ancestors! Apparently in 1667 they forgot or expunged the burning of their battleships in the Medway and Thames and all the passions of hard-fought naval battles because France was about to invade Belgium. Why did Belgium count so much with them? Two hundred and fifty years later we saw the manhood of the British Empire hastening across all the seas and oceans of the world to conquer or die in defence of this same strip of fertile, undulating country about the mouth of the Scheldt. Every one felt he had to go, and no one asked for logical or historical explanations. But then, with our education, we understood many things for which convincing verbal arguments were lacking. So did our ancestors at this time. The Court, the Parliament, the City, the country gentlemen, were all as sure in 1668 that Belgium must not be conquered by the greatest military power on the Continent as were all parties and classes in the British Empire in August 1914. A mystery veiling an instinct!

If resistance to France were possible, still more if it were profitable, the King and Arlington were prepared to make an effort. They sounded the Courts of Europe: but the replies which they received from every quarter were universally discouraging. Spain was utterly incapable of defending her assaulted province. Without English or Dutch shipping she could not even reach it. Yet voluntarily Spain would not yield an inch. The Dutch would not attack France. If strongly supported, they would seek to limit the French territorial gains, but would agree to many of them, and all at the expense of Spain. The Emperor, whatever his Ambassador in London might say, seemed curiously backward. He would make no offensive alliance, least of all with heretics. In fact, as we now know, he was during these very months framing a secret treaty with France for the future partition of the whole Spanish Empire. The Great Elector would not move without subsidies which the Dutch would not and the Spanish could not give him. He was nervous of Sweden, and if the French gave him a free hand in Poland he would not oppose their progress in the west. Truly a depressing prospect for a coalition against the dominating, centralized might of France, wielded by a single man.

In a spirit which it is easy to call 'cold-blooded' and 'cynical' Charles and Arlington next examined the possibility of persuading France to let England share in her winnings, in return for English support in a war against Holland. Here they encountered a sharp

conquered Holland, including the isle of Walcheren, with its valuable ports of Sluys and Cadsand, and the mouths of the Scheldt. Every safeguard was furnished to English naval requirements and colonial ambition.[1] The mastery of the seas, the command of the Dutch outlets, and the exploitation of Asia and the Americas were inestimable temptations. For the young Stadtholder, William of Orange, a prince of Stuart blood, now just twenty, a dignified, if restricted, sphere would be reserved. He might reign as hereditary sovereign over the truncated domains of the former Dutch Republic, for which his great-grandfather William the Silent had battled with all that his life could give. Next there was to be money. Large subsidies, sufficient to make King Charles with his hereditary revenues almost independent in times of peace of his contumacious Parliament, would be provided. Money, very handy for mistresses and Court expenses, but also absolutely necessary to restore and maintain the strength of the Royal Navy, now decaying in its starved dockyards! Such were the secular clauses. But the pact contained what in those days was even graver matter. Charles was to try persistently and faithfully, by every means at his disposal, to bring his subjects back to the Catholic faith. Full allowance would be made for the obvious difficulties of such a task; but the effort was to be continuous and loyal. In any case, not only French money, but French troops were to be available to secure the English monarchy against the anger of Parliament or the revolt of the nation.

Such was the hideous bargain, struck by so fair a hand, upon which the execration of succeeding generations has fastened. Far be it from us to seek to reverse that verdict of history which every British heart must acclaim. It would not, however, have been difficult to state a case at Charles II's council board against any wholehearted espousal of Dutch interests, nor to have pleaded and even justified a temporizing opportunist policy towards France, deceitful though it must be. "We cannot commit ourselves to Holland; at any moment she may outbid us with France. Spain is futile and penniless. Alone we cannot face the enmity of the Great King. Let us take his money to build our fleet, and wait and see what happens." As for religion, Charles had learned in a hard school the will-power of Protestant England. Whatever his own leanings to the Catholic faith, all his statecraft showed that he would never run any serious risk for the sake of reconverting the nation. Manœuvre, fence, and palter as he might, he always submitted, and always meant

[1] Lingard, *History of England*, vol. vi, Appendix.

to submit, with expedition to the deep growl of his subjects and to the authority of their inexpugnable institutions.

The Secret Treaty of Dover was handled personally by Louis, Charles and their intermediary, Minette. But, of course, Colbert de Croissy had long studied its terms, and in England Arlington's support was soon found indispensable. As the protocol began to take shape first Arlington and then Clifford and the rest of the Cabal were invited to approve its secular provisions. It was perhaps less of a turn-about for Arlington than it appeared on the surface, and we cannot measure the slow, persistent pressures to which he yielded. Ministers in those days considered themselves the servants of the King, in the sense of being bound to interpret his will up to the point of impeachment, and sometimes beyond it. The whole Cabal endorsed such parts of the treaty as were communicated to them. The religious plot—it deserves no other name—was locked in the royal breast. James had not been much consulted in the negotiations, but he learned all that had been done with an inexpressible joy. Most especially he admired the religious clauses. Here more clearly than ever before he saw the blessed hands of the Mother of God laid upon the tormented world.

If anyone in 1672 computed the relative forces of France and England, he could only feel that no contest was possible; and the apparent weakness and humiliation of the pensioner island was aggravated by the feeble, divided condition of Europe. No dreamer, however romantic, however remote his dreams from reason, could have foreseen a surely approaching day when, by the formation of mighty coalitions and across the struggles of a generation, the noble colossus of France would lie prostrate in the dust, while the small island, beginning to gather to itself the empires of India and America, stripping France and Holland of their colonial possessions, would emerge victorious, mistress of the Mediterranean, the Narrow Seas, and the oceans. Aye, and carry forward with her, intact and enshrined, all that peculiar structure of law and liberty, all her own inheritance of learning and letters, which are to-day the treasure of the most powerful family in the human race.

This prodigy was achieved by conflicting yet contributory forces, and by a succession of great islanders and their noble foreign comrades or guides. We owe our salvation to the sturdy independence of the House of Commons and to its creators, the aristocracy and country gentlemen. We owe it to our hardy tars and bold

sea captains, and to the quality of a British Army as yet unborn. We owe it to the inherent sanity and vigour of the political conceptions sprung from the genius of the English race. But those forces would have failed without the men to use them. For the quarter of a century from 1688 to 1712 England was to be led by two of the greatest warriors and statesmen in all history: William of Orange, and John, Duke of Marlborough. They broke the military power of France, and fatally weakened her economic and financial foundations. They championed the Protestant faith, crowned Parliamentary institutions with triumph, and opened the door to an age of reason and freedom. They reversed the proportions and balances of Europe. They turned into new courses the destinies of Asia and America. They united Great Britain, and raised her to the rank she holds to-day.

Chapter Five

ARMS

1672–1673

THERE are two main phases in the military career of John, Duke of Marlborough. In the first, which lasted four years, he rose swiftly from ensign to colonel by his conduct and personal qualities and by the impression he made on all who met him in the field. In the second, during ten campaigns he commanded the main army of the Grand Alliance with infallibility. An interval of more than a quarter of a century separates these two heroic periods. From 1671 to 1675 he exhibited all those qualities which were regarded as the forerunners in a regimental officer of the highest military distinction. He won his way up from grade to grade by undoubted merit and daring. But thereafter was a desert through which he toiled and wandered. A whole generation of small years intervened. He was like young men in the Great War who rose from nothing to the head of battalions and brigades, and then found life suddenly contract itself to its old limits after the Armistice. His sword never rusted in its sheath. It was found bright and sharp whenever it was needed, at Sedgemoor, at Walcourt, or in Ireland. There it lay, the sword of certain victory, ready for service whenever opportunity should come.

"Everybody agreed," wrote Anthony Hamilton, "that the man who was the favourite of the King's mistress and brother to the Duke's was starting well and could not fail to make his fortune." But the influence of royal concubines was not the explanation of the rise of Marlborough. That rise was gradual, intermittent, and long. He was a professional soldier. "And," wrote the old Duchess at the end of her life,

> I think it is more Honour to rise from the lowest Step to the greatest, than, as is the fashion now, to be Admirals without ever having seen Water but in a Bason, or to make Generals that never saw any action of war.[1]

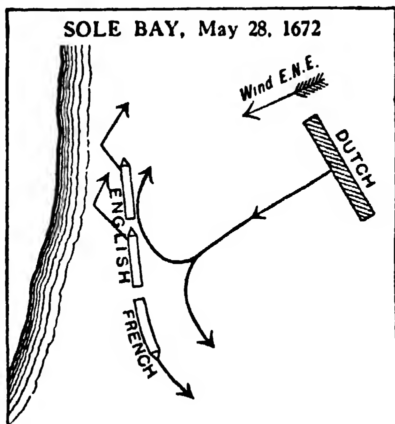
[1] "Some Instructions to the Historians for beginning the Duke of Marlborough's History," by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (Spencer MSS., 1744). See Appendix, II, for full text.

By the time he arrived at the highest command he was passing the prime of life, and older than many of the leading generals of the day. The early success and repeated advancement which this chapter records were followed by lengthy intervals of stagnation. Arabella and Barbara had long ceased to count with him or anyone else, while he was still regarded as a subordinate figure, when he had yet to make and remake his whole career. Continual checks, grave perplexities, extreme hazards, disgrace and imprisonment, constant skilful services, immense tenacity, perseverance and self-restraint, almost unerring political judgment, all the arts of the courtier, politician, and diplomatist, marked his middle life. For many long years his genius and recognized qualities seemed unlikely to carry him through the throng of securely established notabilities who then owned the fulness of the earth. At twenty-four he was a colonel. He was fifty-two before he commanded a large army.

In 1672 the slumbering Treaty of Dover awoke in the realm of action. Louis, having perfected his plans to the last detail, suddenly, without cause of quarrel, made his cavalry swim the Rhine and poured his armies into Holland. At the same time England also declared war upon the Dutch. The States-General, de Witt and his Amsterdammers, taken by surprise, were unable to stem the advance of 120,000 French troops, armed for the first time with the new weapon of the bayonet. Cities and strongholds fell like ninepins. The Dutch people, faced with extermination, set their despairing hopes upon William of Orange. The great-grandson of William the Silent did not fail them. He roused and animated their tough, all-enduring courage. John de Witt and his brother were torn to pieces by a frenzied mob in the streets of The Hague. William uttered the deathless battle-cry, "We can die in the last ditch." The sluices in the dykes were opened; the bitter waters rolled in ever-widening deluge over the fertile land. Upon the wide inundation the fortified towns seemed to float like arks of refuge. All military operations became impossible. The French armies withdrew in bewilderment. Holland, her manhood, her navy, and her hero-Prince preserved their soul impregnable.

Meanwhile the French and English fleets united had set themselves to secure the mastery of the Narrow Seas. A contingent of six thousand English troops under Monmouth's command served with the French armies. Lediard and other early writers suppose

that Churchill was among them. In fact he took part in a deadlier struggle afloat. The sea fighting began on March 13, before the declaration of war, with the surprise attack of Sir Robert Holmes's English squadron upon the Dutch Smyrna fleet while at anchor off the Isle of Wight. This treacherous venture miscarried, and the bulk of the Dutch vessels escaped. The companies of the Guards in which Churchill and his friend George Legge[1] were serving were embarked for the raid and took part in the action.[2]



The handling of the Dutch navy under De Ruyter in this campaign commands lasting admiration. He pressed into the jaws of the Channel to forestall the concentration of the French and English fleets. But the Duke of York, setting sail from the Thames in good time, made his junction with the French fleet from Brest, and De Ruyter was glad to extricate himself from the Channel and return safely to the North Sea. Here he lay off Walcheren and Texel, watching his chance to strike at superior forces and shielding his country meanwhile from an additional invasion. The Duke of York understood that if he could place the Anglo-French fleet about the Dogger Bank (we now know these waters as well as he(the Dutch fleet would be cut off from home as the Germans might have been after Jutland. But the English fleet, starved by Parliament, was ill-found and short of men, and in any case it was necessary to replenish before sailing across the communications of the enemy. The combined fleets therefore proceeded through the Straits of Dover to Sole Bay (or Southwold), on the Suffolk coast, to fit themselves for their enterprise. Here from London several thousand seamen and soldiers, together with a crowd of gentlemen volunteers hurrying from the Court, joined them. For three days all the ships lay in the open roadstead busily embarking men, food, and munitions. But this was the opportunity which De Ruyter sought.

[1] Afterwards Lord Dartmouth.

[2] Atkinson, *Marlborough and the Rise of the British Army*, p. 39, is the only writer who has noted this incident in Churchill's career. His account is exact; but his reference should be *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1671–72, p. 609.

Lord Sandwich, whose name revives from one generation to another in battleships christened *Montagu*, was a wary, hard-bitten salt. At the council of war he complained of the posture and wished to put to sea. His warnings were ill received and attributed to excess of caution. Anyhow, everything was being done as fast as possible. But on the morning of May 28/June 7 a French frigate, hotly pursued, brought the news that the whole Dutch fleet was at her heels. Every one scrambled on board, and a hundred and one ships endeavoured to form their line of battle. The French division, under D'Estrées, whether from policy or necessity or because James's orders were lacking in precision, sailed upon a divergent course from the English fleet. De Ruyter, playing with the French and sending Van Ghent to attack the ships of Lord Sandwich, fell himself upon the Duke of York's division, of which at first not more than twenty were in their stations. In all he had ninety-one vessels and a superiority of at least two to one in the first part of the battle.

> I cannot stay to name the names
> Of all the ships that fought with James,
> Their number and their tonnage;
> But this I say: the noble host
> Right gallantly did take its post,
> And covered all the hollow coast,
> From Walderswyck to Dunwich.[1]

Grievous and cruel was the long struggle which ensued. The Suffolk shores were crowded with frantic spectators, the cannonade was heard two hundred miles away. From noon till dusk the battle raged at close quarters. The Dutch desperately staked their superiority with cannon and fire-ships against the English, tethered upon a lee shore. The Duke of York's flagship, the *Prince*, was the central target of the attack. Upon her decks stood the 1st Company of the Guards—Captain Daniels, Lieutenant Picks, and Ensign Churchill. Smitten by the batteries of several Dutchmen, assailed by two successive fire-ship attacks, and swept by musketry, she was so wrecked in hull and rigging that by eleven o'clock she could no longer serve as a flagship. The Duke of York, who in the actual battle of Sole Bay displayed the courage expected of an English prince and admiral, was forced to shift his flag to the *St Michael*, and when this ship became unmanageable in turn he was rowed with his staff to the *London*. The Guards company had remained

[1] "A Song on the Duke's late Glorious Success over the Dutch." from *Naval Songs and Ballads* (ed. Firth, 1906), p. 82.

upon the *Prince*. The captain of the ship and more than two hundred men, a third of the complement, were killed or wounded. Both sides fought with the doggedness on which their races pride themselves. Lord Sandwich, brought to a standstill by a small Dutch vessel, wedged with extreme audacity under the bowsprit of the *Royal James*, became the prey of fire-ships. With his personal officers he paced his quarter-deck till the flames drove him overboard, where he perished. Both sides awaited the explosion of the magazines. The magazines of the *Royal James* did not explode. All her powder had been fired when she sank. Sunset and the possible return of the French ended a battle described by De Ruyter as the hardest of his thirty-two actions, and the Dutch withdrew, having destroyed for many weeks the offensive power of the superior combined fleets.[1]

Not one single word has come down to us of John's part in this deadly business, through which he passed unscathed. No reference to it exists in his correspondence or conversation. This was before the age when everybody kept diaries or wrote memoirs. It was just in the day's work. All we know is that his conduct gained him remarkable advancement. No fewer than four captains of the Admiralty Regiment had been killed, and he received double promotion from a Guards ensign to a Marine captaincy.[2]

Lieutenant Edward Picks complained to Sir Joseph Williamson, Arlington's Under-Secretary, that:

> Mr Churchill, who was my ensign in the engagement, is made a Captain and I, without my Lord Arlington's kindness and yours, I fear may still continue a lieutenant, though I am confident my greatest enemies cannot say I misbehaved myself in the engagement. . . .

He further declared:

> . . . if you will oblige me with your kindness to get me a company, I will present you with four hundred guineas when I receive my commission. Sir, I am confident it may be done by my Lord Arlington, for the King will not deny him anything.[3]

We do not know the details of the action. Favouritism there

[1] A full account of this battle with admirable contemporary picture-plans is given by Corvett (Navy Records Society, 1908). Mahan's comments are also instructive (*The Influence of Sea Power on History*, 1896, chapter iii).

[2] The commission, dated June 13, 1672, is at Blenheim. Cf. *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1671–72, pp. 218, 222, and C. Dalton, *Army Lists*, i, 127–128.

[3] October 20, 1672 .printed in full in F. W. Hamilton, *History of the Grenadier Guards*, i, 166.

may have been in the double step, but it was favouritism founded upon exceptional conduct. In such rough times, when chiefs and subalterns faced the fire together, many wholesome correctives were at work. The Duke of York, coming himself out of heavy battle, would have acted in accordance with what he had seen and with what men said of Churchill's conduct.

Sole Bay for the time being knocked out the fleet, and only meagre funds were found to refit and repair it. The infantry and gentlemen volunteers came ashore, and the Guards were ordered to France. The courtiers forgathered at Whitehall to celebrate their experiences in revel and carouse, and John, fresh from danger and in the flush of promotion, was welcomed, we doubt not, in the arms of Barbara. It is believed that at this time she paid the purchase money which enabled him to take up the captaincy his sword had gained. We apologize for mentioning such shocking facts to the reader; but it is our duty, for such was the depravity of these fierce and hectic times.

In 1673 Louis XIV again made war in person. Condé with weak forces occupied the Dutch in the north. Turenne similarly engaged the Imperialists in Alsace. The Great King advanced in the centre with the mass and magnificence of the French Army. His Majesty quitted Saint-Germains on May 1, accompanied by the Queen, Madame de Montespan, and the Court. It is understood that the presence of the Queen was indispensable to cover that of the mistress, and thus prevent scandal arising. The proprieties being observed, the assemblage arrived in due course at Tournai, where Madame de Montespan, who was with child, gave birth to a daughter. This happy event having been accomplished with full decorum, the hero-monarch took leave of his Court and his ladies, and, attended only by a personal retinue of several hundred persons, including a sufficiency of painters, poets, and historians, set himself to the stern business of war, entered his coach, and marched upon Courtrai. All the world wondered where he would strike. It soon appeared that he had honoured Maestricht, a strong Dutch fortress garrisoned by about five thousand men, as the scene of his intended triumph. He felt his military qualities more suited to sieges than to battles; and "Big sieges," he remarked, "please me more than the others."[1] Maestricht was accordingly invested on June 17.

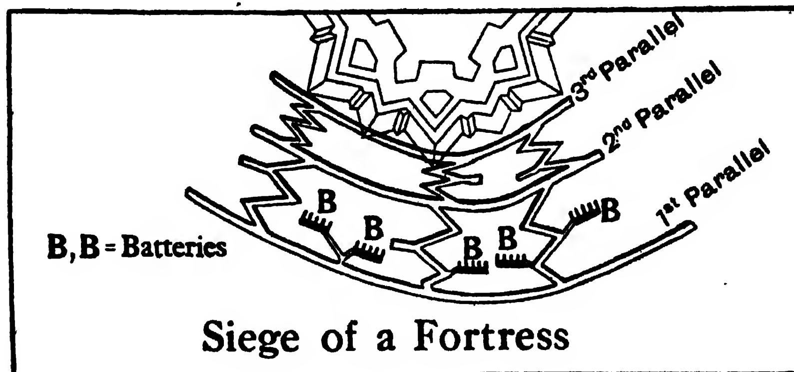
It will be well for the reader to accustom himself at this point

[1] Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vii, 2, 317–318.

to the routine and ritual of siege operations in this period; for unhappily these pages must speak of many. A network of fortresses, great and small, covered the frontiers of France and Holland. All were constructed upon the principles of Vauban or his Dutch competitor, Cohorn. We often gaze at these star-shaped plans without comprehending the marvellous intricacy of the defences they portray. Each salient angle (or ravelin), each pentagon (or bastion), was a self-contained compartment with its proper guns and garrison. Every line was so drawn as to be protected by flanking fire of cannon, or at least musketry, at right-angles. Around these ramparts, and conforming geometrically to their trace, ran the 'open ditch,' a stone-faced alley perhaps 20 feet deep and 40 feet wide, upon the farther side of which stretched the smooth glacis with its 'covered way,' often guarded by minor advanced defences, all commanded in reverse from the main line. The wall of the ditch nearest the rampart was called the scarp, and the opposite wall nearest the besiegers the counterscarp. The counterscarp was, where necessary, lined with galleries subterraneously connected with the fortress. From the stone-faced loopholes of these galleries annihilating fire, additional to all flanking fire, could be poured into the backs of any hostile troops who entered the ditch. Such, in short, was the defence.

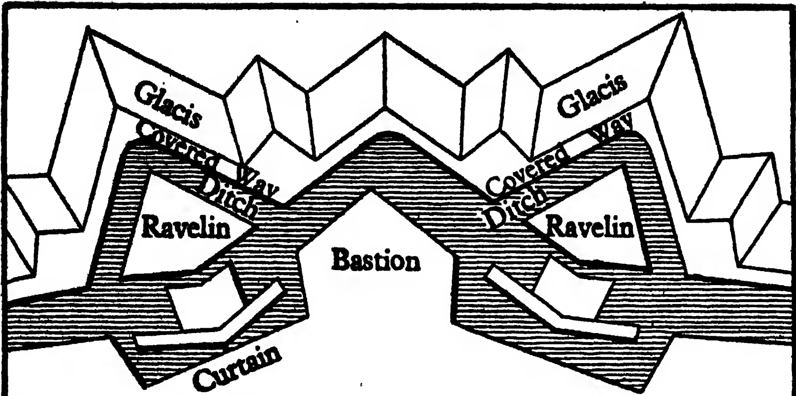
The procedure of the attack was as follows. First the fortress was invested—*i.e.*, surrounded by a superior army and, so far as possible, cut off entirely from the world. Next, on the side chosen for attack the trenches were opened. In general there were three parallels, the first being dug just beyond the range of the fortress cannon. From this first parallel zigzag approaches were dug to the second, and from this again, the zigzags getting ever more acute, to the third. The third parallel should have carried the assailants to the edge or within striking distances of the fortifications. Then by mining and close hand-to-hand fighting the counterscarp galleries of the sector under attack were seized and large portions of the counterscarp blown into the ditch. Meanwhile the besieging batteries planted in or behind the second parallel, and protected against sorties by strong entrenchments and infantry garrisons, had been firing day after day, and sometimes week after week, upon the ramparts, silencing the defenders' cannon and breaching their parapets. Thus when the moment was ripe a rough but continuous road lay open from the first parallel into the fortress or into such ravelins or bastions of the fortress as had been battered.

The crisis of the assault was now imminent. Superior masses of troops, headed by their 'forlorn hopes' of volunteers, were assembled in the third parallel and other slits dug close by and in the captured counterscarp galleries; and on the signal these charged across the *débris* which filled the covered way, climbed through the breach in the pulverized ramparts, and, storming whatever improvised breastworks or barricades the defenders had been able to construct, broke into the city.

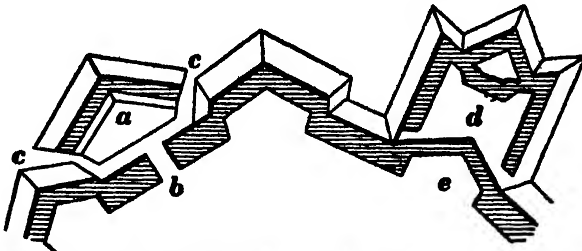


Siege of a Fortress

However, the conflict rarely reached this culmination. A minute and rigorous etiquette governed both sides in a siege during the half-century of war with which we are concerned. The governor of a fortress was expected by his own Government as well as by his assailants to use it for what it was worth, and no more. If he stood an assault and repelled it, even though he afterwards was forced to surrender, his fame was great. If he resisted until the breaches were practicable, he might make a bargain to save needless loss of life which entitled the garrisons to march out with all the honours of war—"bag and baggage, drums beating, matches lighted, bullet in the mouth, etc." The city then passed peacefully into the hands of the besiegers, who usually treated the inhabitants with all proper consideration. But if the governor, presuming too much on fortune, forced the besiegers to a needless assault which in fact he well knew he could not resist, and if the place was taken by storm, then the whole city was given up to sack, rape, and flame. Very nice questions therefore arose for all governors and for the civil inhabitants once the assault was imminent, and their conduct in these circumstances was judged by highly standardized expert opinion on both sides and in all the armies of Europe.

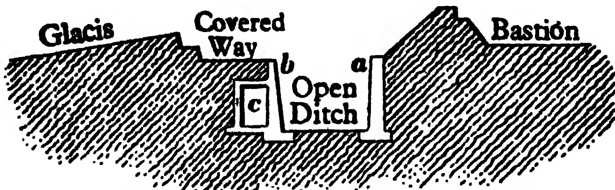


Details of Part of a Fortress



a = Demilune Covering. *d* = Hornwork Covering.
b = Gate and *e* = A Bastion.
c, *c* = Two Sally Ports.

Further details to illustrate terms



a = Scarp *b* = Counterscarp
c = Counterscarp Gallery

Section through a Bastion

THE DEFENCES OF A FORTRESS

We have, of course, explained only the conventional features of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century siege. Each case among the many hundreds that occurred presented peculiarities of its own. Sometimes in the greatest operations a relieving army strong enough to break the investment, if not to beat the besiegers, approached the scene. This had to be warded off in one of two ways. Either a covering army manœuvred continually between the fortress and its would-be rescuers, or else the besiegers constructed what are called 'lines of circumvallation'—*i.e.*, they built an improvised fortress around themselves, enclosing the doomed city in its midst, and were besieged from without, while pressing their attack within. We shall presently see the Duke of Marlborough besieging cities whose garrisons were almost as strong as his own army, while his covering forces confronted a relieving army capable at any moment of fighting an equal battle in the field.

Nothing of this kind, however, presented itself at the siege of Maestricht. It was less like a serious war struggle than a sanguinary tournament in which the common soldiers were slaughtered as well as the knights and nobles. The strength of the French army was unchallengeable, and no relieving forces durst appear. Vauban prescribed the stages and method of the attack, and the Great King took the credit. "Vauban," he explained modestly, "proposed me the steps which I thought the best." Above all, the master enjoined prudence. Nothing was to be hurried, no stage was to be slurred. The operation was to be a model. "Let us go surely, taking even unnecessary precautions." We are assured that he set a personal example in the endurance of hardships—no doubt for an hour or two by day or night; and that he exposed his sacred person from time to time to the fire of the enemy. And all was duly immortalized in the French poetry, tapestries, pictures, and engravings of the age.

We do not know precisely what happened to Captain Churchill between the battle of Sole Bay and the siege of Maestricht. The Admiralty regiment in which he now held a company went to France in December. Various English contingents were serving in Alsace or in garrison with the French. It seems probable that once it became clear that the centre of the war was to be in Flanders and that the Great King would be there himself, Monmouth allowed or encouraged a handful of swells and their personal attendants to leave the different units of the army and come to the bull's-eye of

the fighting under his personal direction. At any rate, England was represented at Maestricht only by the Duke of Monmouth with a score of gentlemen volunteers, prominent among whom was Churchill, and an escort of thirty gentlemen troopers of the Life Guards. Louis XIV treated the distinguished delegation with the ceremony due to the bastard son of his royal brother. Monmouth was assigned his turn as 'General of the Trenches,' and ample opportunity was offered to him and his friends of winning distinction before the most critical and fashionable military assemblage of the period. Every one of them was on his mettle, eager to hazard his life in the arena and wrest renown from beneath so many jealous and competent eyes. Little did this gay company trouble themselves about the rights and wrongs of the war, or the majestic balance of power in Europe; and we cannot doubt that our young officer shared their reckless mood to the full. Comradeship and adventure and the hopes of glory and promotion seemed all-sufficing to the eyes and sword of youth.

The trenches were opened ten days after the investment, and a week later the siege works justified an attempt to break in upon the fortress. The attack, timed for ten o'clock at night, was arranged to fall in Monmouth's tour of duty. Picked detachments from the best regiments, including the King's Musketeers, formed the storming forces. The King came and stood at the end of the trenches to watch. The signal was given, and Monmouth, with Churchill and his Englishmen at his side, led the French assault. With heavy losses from close and deadly fire, amid the explosion of two mines and of six thousand grenades, the counterscarp galleries were occupied, and a half-moon work in front of the Brussels gate was attacked. Three times the assailants were driven partly out of their lodgments and three times they renewed the assault, until finally Churchill is said to have planted the French standard on the parapet of the half-moon. The rest of the night was spent in consolidating the defence and digging new communications, and at daylight Monmouth handed over the captured works to supporting troops. The Englishmen were resting in their tents, and Monmouth was about to dine, when near noon of the next day the dull roar of a mine and heavy firing proclaimed the Dutch counterstroke. The governor, M. de Fariaux, a Frenchman in the service of the States-General, gallantly leading his men, had sallied out upon the captured works.

The episode which followed belongs to romance rather than to history or war, but the most detailed and authentic records exist

about it. We have two first-hand accounts in letters written to Arlington; one is from Duras, a French Huguenot noble of high rank who as early as 1665—flying from the wrath to come—had naturalized himself an English subject. Duras, like Churchill, was personally attached to the Duke of York, and seems to have enjoyed his unbounded confidence and favour. He subsequently became the Earl of Feversham, whom we shall meet again presently at Sedgemoor. A further account (from which we shall quote) is from Lord Alington, who was himself in the thick of the fighting.

Monmouth sent appeals to a company of musketeers at hand. Their officer, a certain M. d'Artagnan, then famous in the Army and since deathless in Dumas's fiction, responded instantly. There was no time to go through the zigzags of the communication trenches. De Fariaux was already in the half-moon. Monmouth, fleet of foot, led straight for the struggle across the top of the ground. With him came Churchill, twelve Life Guardsmen, and a handful of English of quality, with some valiant pages and servants. They reached the half-moon from an unexpected direction at the moment when the fighting was at its height. D'Artagnan and his musketeers joined them. The Life Guards threw away their carbines (twelve were subsequently reissued from the English ordnance stores) and drew their swords. Monmouth, Churchill, and d'Artagnan forced their way in. Here Lord Alington's letter to Lord Arlington[1] will best carry on the account.

> After the Duke had put on his arms, we went not out at the ordinary place, but leapt over the banke of the Trenches, in the face of our Enemy. Those that hapned to be with the Duke were Mr Charles Obrien, Mr Villars,[2] Lord Rockingham's two sons, and Capt. Watson their kinsman, Sir Tho. Armstrong, Capt. Churchille, Capt. Godfrey, Mr Roe and myselfe, with the Duke's two Pages and three or four more of his servants, thus we marcht with our swords in our hands to a barricade of the Enemys, where only one man could passe at a time. There was Monsieur Artaignan with his musketeers who did very bravely. This Gentleman was one of the greatest reputation in the Army, he would have perswaded the Duke not to have past that place, but that beeing not to be done, this Gentleman would goe along with him, but in passing that narrow place was kill'd with a shot

[1] S.P., 78/137, f. 142. Confusion between Alington and Arlington has led to error in many books.

[2] Or Villiers, son of Lord Grandison. Several writers confuse him at this point with Louis Hector de Villars, afterwards the famous French Marshal, who fought in a different part of the same attack.

> through his head, upon wch the Duke and we past where Mr O'Brien had a shot through his leages. The souldiers att this tooke heart the Duke twice leading them on with Great Courage; when his Grace found the enemy being to retire, he was prevail'd with to retire to the Trenche, the better to give his Commands as there should be occasion. Then he sent Mr Villars to the King for 500 fresh men and to give him an account of what had past. When those men came, our Enemys left us without any farther disturbance, masters of what we had gained the night before. so that to the Dukes' great Honor we not only tooke more than was expected, but maintain'd it after we had been in possession of it, but with the losse of a great many men and many brave officers. One of their Great Fournoes blewe into the aire near 50 men, just before they made their sally. And I truly believe we had killed and wounded from the time we went into the Trenches to our comeing out, about 1500. Some old Commanders say, this was the bravest and briskest action they had seen in their lives, and our Duke did the part of a much older and more experienced General, and the King was very kinde to him last night.

Churchill, who was wounded at Monmouth's side, was also held to have distinguished himself. He was, in fact, publicly thanked upon a great parade by Louis XIV, who assured him that his good conduct would be reported to his own sovereign. Another subaltern fought in this attack whose name will recur in these pages: Louis Hector de Villars against orders joined the assault. His gallantry won forgiveness for his disobedience. We do not know whether he and Churchill became acquainted at Maestricht. They certainly met at Malplaquet.

The governor of Maestricht, satisfied with the resistance he had made and strongly pressed by the townsfolk to capitulate while time remained, beat a parley, and was allowed to march out with the honours of war. The severity of the losses, especially among persons of note in the storming troops, made a strong impression throughout the camps and the Courts concerned. Monmouth was praised and petted by Louis not only from policy, but on the undoubted merit of his performance. He and his English team received the unstinted tributes of "the finest army in the world." The brief and spectacular campaign was soon brought to a close. Louis XIV rejoined his anxious Court, who burned before him the incense of flattery with all the delicate address of which the French are peculiarly capable. The armies retired into winter quarters, and Monmouth and his hunting party were welcomed again into the bosom of Whitehall.

Churchill's favour stood high at this time. Monmouth commended him to Charles with the words, "Here is the brave man who saved my life." To this there was to be a grim sequel. The King, who was by this time in full flight with the charming Louise de Kéroualle, and was perhaps not so sorry as he ought to have been to have Barbara taken off his hands and made thoroughly happy, was gracious to a degree. England seemed to have shared the honours of the siege of Maestricht without any of the trouble, expense, and loss of sending an army.

Meanwhile Captain Churchill and the Duchess of Cleveland continued to make the running at the Court. That a virile young officer should be the lover of a beautiful, voluptuous, and immoral woman is not inexplicable to human nature. The fact that she was a few years his senior is by no means a bar. On the contrary, the charms of thirty-two are rarely more effective than when exerted on the impressionable personality of twenty-three. No one is invited to applaud such relationships, but few, especially in time of war, will hold them unpardonable, and only malignancy would seek to score them for ever upon a young man's record. How disgusting to pretend, with Lord Macaulay, a filthy, sordid motive for actions prompted by those overpowering compulsions which leap flaming from the crucible of life itself! Inconstant Barbara loved her youthful soldier tenderly and followed with eager, anxious eyes his many adventures and perils from steel and fire. He returned her love with the passion of youth. She was rich and could have money for the asking. He had no property but his sword and sash. But they were equals, they were kin, they lived in the same world. She was now the mother of his child.

Contemporaries vie with one another in describing her charms. She was by all accounts a picture of transcendent loveliness. Already the hopes of the future gleamed upon John's shapely frame and noble countenance. Why need we seek farther for the impulses that drew and held these two together? Why make of their romance a shameful scarecrow of mercenary vice? Naturally she wished to help him in the way that would help him most; naturally she gave him money, and was proud to have it to give. The wars lay on the coasts, and from time to time the sound of hostile guns thudded in the English air. Death stood very near a captain of the Guards, and love drew majesty and sanction from that sombre presence. He, serving ashore and afloat under the shot of the enemy, must have felt no shame and earned no scorn in taking from her hands the

modest necessary sums without which he could not have pursued his career or taken his promotions as he gained them. But it would, of course, have been much better if John had been wealthy and chaste, and if Barbara had remained the faithful spouse of Roger Palmer. The association brought him the frowns—if increasingly perfunctory—rather than the favour of the Royal Power. The only reward which the King bestowed upon the presumptuous rival in waning affections was to set him in the forefront of the battle. But this was a reward of which the recipient was prepared to take the the fullest advantage.

He was back at the front in the early autumn. The Admiralty Regiment was now with Turenne in Westphalia. There is little doubt that Churchill served as a captain with them during the rest of 1673. Although no great operations were in progress, he made his way in the Army. There is always the story of Turenne wagering, when some defile had been ill defended, that the "handsome Englishman" would retake it with half the number of troops used when it was lost; and how this was accordingly and punctually done. No one has been able to assign the date or the place, but at any rate the newly made captain in the Admiralty Regiment was a figure well known in Turenne's army and high in the favour of the Marshal himself before the year closed.

Chapter Six

THE DANBY ADMINISTRATION

1673–1674

FOR some time King Charles proceeded on the lines of the Secret Treaty of Dover. He had issued his Declaration of Indulgence, which in the name of toleration gave to Catholics the freedom they were denying to Protestants in every country where they were in the ascendant. But the French subsidies, though quite convenient for paying a peace-time navy, were utterly inadequate to maintain a costly war. The expenses of the two great sea battles, Sole Bay and the Texel, and the repair of the fleet were enormous. Even the contingent of six thousand men in France was a heavy charge. The King was forced to repudiate the interest upon his loans from the goldsmiths and the bankers in the celebrated "Stop of the Exchequer." Parliament had been prorogued for fifteen months: it must now be called together.

Accordingly in February 1673 the once enthusiastic Cavalier Parliament reassembled in a mood of pent-up passion. We have invaluable reports of their debates in the records kept by Mr Grey, the Member for Derby. The Commons demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence as a precedent condition of all supply. They did not at this stage attack the Dutch war. Indeed, Shaftesbury's Ministerial fulmination against Holland, *Delenda est Carthago*, received silent approval. They do not seem to have been moved by the heroic spectacle of Protestant resistance to Louis. The war at sea against so dangerous a naval rival as Holland aroused their partisanship. It was the pro-Catholic inclination of the Crown which excited their wrath. Louis XIV, on the other hand, was more interested in victory over the Dutch than in the fortunes of the English Catholics. His Ambassador was instructed to advise Charles to give way upon the Declaration of Indulgence, and even to accept a Test Act which excluded Papists from all offices of State. Charles agreed, and the Commons voted a liberal supply of £1,200,000.

Stern, curious eyes were now turned upon the Duke of York.

Rumours of his conversion to Rome had long been rife. How would he stand the Test? The answer was soon forthcoming. The heir to the throne renounced all his offices, and Prince Rupert succeeded him in the command of the fleet. So it was true, then, that James was a resolute Papist, ready to sacrifice all material advantages to the faith his countrymen abhorred. And now there came a trickle of allegations and disclosures about the Secret Treaty of Dover. Rumours of decisions taken by the King, by his brother, and his Ministers to convert England to Rome were rife during all the summer and autumn of 1673.

Moreover, the war went ill. Like so many wars, it looked easy and sure at the outset. There is always the other side, who have their own point of view and think, often with surprising reason, that they also have a chance of victory. The cutting of the dykes had marred the opening French campaign. The Dutch defensive at sea in 1672 and 1673 was magnificent. Rupert's battles against De Ruyter were bloody and drawn. The situation of Holland had vastly improved. The Prince of Orange, Stadtholder and Captain-General, stood at the head of truly 'United Provinces,' and in August both the Empire and Spain entered into alliance with the Dutch to maintain the European balance. Diplomatically and militarily the Anglo-French compact had failed. On top of all this came the news that Charles had allowed a most obnoxious marriage between the Duke of York and the Catholic princess Mary of Modena.

A standing army of ten thousand men, commanded by a Frenchman, assembled first at Blackheath and then at Yarmouth, was believed by many to be designed for a forcible conversion of England to Popery. Our affairs had already reached a sufficient refinement for the passage of subsidies across the Channel to be reflected in Anglo-French exchange. When Parliament met in October all sections were united in the demand for peace with Holland and the end of the alliance with France. Vehement opponents demanded the overthrow of the Ministry. But by this date the Cabal was already splintering into its original elements. It had held together upon the principle of toleration for Catholics and Dissenters. Now Parliament deliberately rejected, and, indeed, reversed, this policy. Clifford, himself almost certainly a Catholic, finally wrecked the Cabal by his refusal to take the Test, and he retired to his estates to die so swiftly that men spoke of suicide or a broken heart. Arlington became Lord Chamberlain and passed out

of power into Court life and the pursuit of wealth and security. Ashley, soon to become first Earl of Shaftesbury, and Buckingham made terms with the Whig Opposition, from whom, as Puritans, they had originally come. Henceforward they led the assault upon the King, for whose misguided policy they had been partly responsible. Lauderdale, the first to be assailed, alone survived to continue his skilful maltreatment of Scotland.

A new scene, and, indeed, a new era, now opened. The man upon whom the King began increasingly to rely was Sir Thomas Osborne, who had been made a baron and had succeeded Clifford as Lord Treasurer in June 1673. A year later he was created Earl of Danby, the one of his five titles best known to history. Sprung from a Yorkshire family faithfully Cavalier, Danby had a large, though highly critical, following in the House of Commons. More than most statesmen of this period he had a sense of England as a personality. He was in many ways a typical 'John Bull.' Equally averse from Catholics and Dissenters, he sought to rally the nation to the throne upon the old Royalist cry of "Church and King." He set himself to manage the House of Commons, not only by a policy generally agreeable to them, but by pretty bold corruption of individual members such as was afterwards perfected by Sir Robert Walpole. Although the King differed from Danby both on the French alliance and the Catholic succession, he leaned upon him, and already felt the need of an organized following, besides the Court party, behind Ministers in the House of Commons. Danby did his work with robust vigour. The King swung steadily and smoothly with the change of the tide like a ship at anchor, and his prow and guns were soon pointing in exactly the opposite direction.

Through Spanish mediation peace was signed with Holland on February 19, 1674. The Dutch, stubborn though they were, gave in their sore straits the fullest satisfaction to English naval pride. Within six years of the Medway, within two years of Sole Bay, and within a year of De Ruyter's proud encounters with Rupert, Holland accepted with every circumstance of humility the naval supremacy of England. The States-General confirmed the agreement of the Treaty of Breda (1667) that all Dutch ships should dip their flag and topsails whenever, north of Cape Finisterre, they sighted an English man-of-war. Not only were Dutch fleets and squadrons to make their salute to similar forces of the Royal Navy, but even the whole of the Dutch fleet was to make its submission to a single English vessel, however small, which flew the royal flag. The history

books which dwell upon our shame in the Medway and the Thames do not do justice to this turning of the tables. Callous, unmoral, unscrupulous as had been Charles's policy, he might now on this account at least exclaim, "He laughs best who laughs last."

Peace had relieved the finances from an insupportable strain. The continuance of the war on the Continent gave the English many profits as traders and as carriers for both sides. The Dutch indemnity came to hand. In two years Danby rescued the country from bankruptcy. Profiting by a period of expanding trade and an increased yield from customs and excise, and freed from the gigantic war-charges, he was able to make the King comfortable. He wielded the axe of economy in all directions, laying up the fleet and disbanding the greater part of the Army. The Danby Administration—for such, indeed, it was in modern Parliamentary parlance—although the first of its kind, gave effect to the will of the people more fully than is usually done now as the result of popular elections.

The King was conscious of a great relief. He had become, in fact, for the moment a constitutional sovereign with a popular Minister to bear the brunt. But as soon as the national tension diminished, politics became more complex. Neither King nor Minister had really trusted each other, or pursued a single policy. Charles had not unnaturally some feelings of compunction, as between one gentleman and another, about Louis, whom he had unquestionably cheated. He did not wish to risk open personal rupture with so dangerous a potentate. The late hostilities against the Dutch had been described as "war without anger." Could not the desertion of France be accomplished at least without impoliteness? Charles was therefore anxious to keep in touch with the French King, and especially to receive his money; and from time to time there were minor secret agreements, largely arising out of the failure to implement the original Treaty of Dover. Something had, for instance, to be patched up about the British troops serving in the pay of France and other matters of that kind, so as not to make the reversal of policy an utterly impudent breach of contract.

This policy quickly developed into an interlude of political blackmail used simultaneously against Parliament on the one hand and Louis on the other. Danby, in full accord with the Prince of Orange, moved towards a breach with France. But Louis, in spite of previous disappointments, thought it worth while to purchase English neutrality. This was just the kind of game which King Charles could play extremely well, and apart from its squalid aspect no

great harm was done to English interests. The King got money from the House of Commons by saying, "If you are hostile to France, we must get our fleet and army into order: give me money." To Louis he said, "Unless you keep me in a position of complete independence of the House of Commons, they will make me join the Dutch: give me money." Very considerable sums were paid from both quarters, while all the time nothing was done to satisfy either. Like Danton a century later, Charles was "paid for, but not bought."

The King got on well with his Minister—too well, in fact, for the fortunes of the latter. We had unconsciously arrived at a kind of dyarchy in which the distinctive forces of Crown and Parliament held each other in play with many a compromise and reservation, and, in spite of much friction, arrived often at some agreed step. The Ministers generally considered they must obey the King and take responsibility for his actions up to the point, at any rate, where their own heads came into danger. Danby had no direct correspondence with the French, and though he feathered his own nest in accordance with custom and saw that his numerous relations did not lack jobs, he took no money himself from Louis. Nevertheless, he shouldered the burden of the French intrigue as a necessary part of what was in its initiation his successful policy. He acquiesced in the King's habit of taking French money. He even signed "by the King's command" the receipts for important sums. Montagu, the English Ambassador in Paris, urged the plan. "Now is the time to ask the French; they can refuse you nothing," he counselled. When there was much suspicion and talk Danby adopted a brazen attitude. He said in effect to important intimates, "Let us spoil the Amalekites; let us make the French pay through the nose. They are getting nothing in return." Charles for his part was well content that this double auction should go on indefinitely. He kept on urging Louis to moderate his ambitions, and to make peace with the Dutch. He expatiated on the difficulties of his position, and warned his royal brother that, unless large payments arrived punctually, he would be forced into war against him. He took all the money he could get from Parliament to increase his armaments, ostensibly for hostilities against France. So ran affairs during 1676 and 1677.

There were in 1674 five or six thousand English troops in French pay; but these had to be reduced after the Anglo-Dutch treaty, and as many of the men returned home and no drafts were sent out, the strength of the various regiments soon fell, and it became neces-

sary to amalgamate units. Thus Skelton's regiment became merged with Peterborough's. Peterborough resigned. Who was to take his place? Who should command the combined regiment but the brilliant officer who had planted the lilies of France on the parapet of the Maestricht half-moon, whose quality was known throughout the French Army, who had been thanked by Louis in the field, and whose advancement was so entirely agreeable to Charles II, to the Duke of York, and to both their lady-loves? A news-letter from Paris on March 19, 1674, says:

> Lord Peterborough's regiment, now in France, is to be broken up and some companies of it joined to the companies that went out of the Guards last summer, and be incorporated into one regiment, and to remain there for the present under the command of Captain Churchill, son of Sir Winston.[1]

But before Churchill could receive the colonelcy he had to be presented at Versailles and receive the personal approval of the Great King. He therefore proceeded to Paris furnished with a letter from Monmouth to Louvois, the French Minister of War, which explained the proposed amalgamation of regiments. On March 21 Louvois wrote to thank Monmouth for his letter, to announce that Churchill had been accepted as a colonel in the French service by Louis XIV, and to suggest that companies not merely from Skelton's, but also from Sackville's and Hewetson's regiments, should be included in his command.[2] On April 3 the commission was granted, and John Churchill found himself Colonel in the service of France and at the head of a regiment of English infantry.[3] He was just twenty-four. He had skipped the rank of lieutenant after Sole Bay; he now, in the French service, skips the ranks of Major and Lieutenant-Colonel at a bound. He retained his substantive rank of Captain in the English Army until January 1675, when he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in the Duke of York's regiment. He had evidently at this time impressed his personality on the French Court. He had been there a year before with half a dozen English officers on the way to the Maestricht campaign. Once again the Great King

[1] Le Fleming Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 108.

[2] Louvois to Monmouth, March 31 (N.S.), 1674; *Dépôt de la guerre*, 391, pièce 204. *Cf.* Lockhart to Arlington of the same date (S.P., 78/139, f. 73).

[3] The original commission, dated April 3/13, is at Blenheim. Lord Wolseley has made two errors in connexion with this commission. In the first place he has dated it March 3/13, and in the second place he has linked it with a correspondence of Louvois throwing doubts on Churchill's suitability for the post, which belongs to nearly three years later.

acknowledged the bows of the young Adonis in scarlet and gold, of whose exploits under the planets of Mars and Venus he had already been well informed through the regular channels. He would certainly not have allowed the royal radiance to play upon this elegant, graceful figure if there were not veils which shroud the future.

No historian has examined the scanty records of Churchill's movements from 1674 to 1677 with the care and accuracy of Atkinson. It is surprising that he should cast doubts upon Churchill's presence at the battle of Sinzheim. The foundations of this are solid. Mr Hare, some day the Duke of Marlborough's chaplain, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, accompanied him on several of his campaigns. His well-known journal was read by Marlborough himself, and is one of our comparatively few indisputable documents. Hare, writing about the campaign of 1704, states that on June 15 the Duke advanced to Sinzheim, "which he could not but remember since the year 1674, when he there commanded an English regiment under the great general Marshal Turenne, in the memorable battle fought between him and the Imperial generals, the Duke of Loraine and Count Caprara."[1]

This passage is familiar. It is confirmed by a manuscript account of the battle of Sinzheim which a search of the French military archives has revealed.[2] By this document Churchill is shown serving apart from his own regiment as a volunteer, as at Maestricht, with Douglas's regiment of foot in the French reconnaissance before the battle.

> As it was known that there was no news of the enemy army about Heidelberg, and thinking that it was stationed far off to the right in the direction of the Margravate of Baden, Douglas was immediately ordered to advance with 1500 musketeers and 6 guns. On the third day after his departure from Hagenau he arrived near Wisloch, three hours from Heidelberg in the direction of Heilbron; he had taken with him M. de Montgaillard and Mr Hamilton, Mr Churchill and M. Duvivier, Quartermaster of the Languedoc regiment, these latter as volunteers.

This detachment rejoined Turenne on June 15, and on the 16th the whole army marched on Sinzheim, on the left bank of the Elsatz. The battle began with Turenne's seizure of the town and the forcing of the stream. The fighting lasted for seven hours and ended in the retreat of the enemy with heavy loss. Although unaccompanied by

[1] Coxe, i, 8 *n*.

[2] *Dépôt de la guerre*, 413, pièce 138.

strategic results, it is claimed as a perfect example in miniature of Turenne's handling of all three arms. Turenne after various manœuvres received reinforcements, and proceeded to ravage the Palatinate, partly to fill his own magazines and partly to impede its reoccupation by a still unbeaten enemy.[1] This military execution of the province dictated by the needs of war must be distinguished from the systematic devastation of the same region ordered by Louis XIV seven years later as a measure of policy.

We have a letter from an old lady—the widow Saint-Just—one of the few residents who did not suffer from Turenne's severities in 1674, written to the Duke of Marlborough from Metz on July 16, 1711, in which she says:

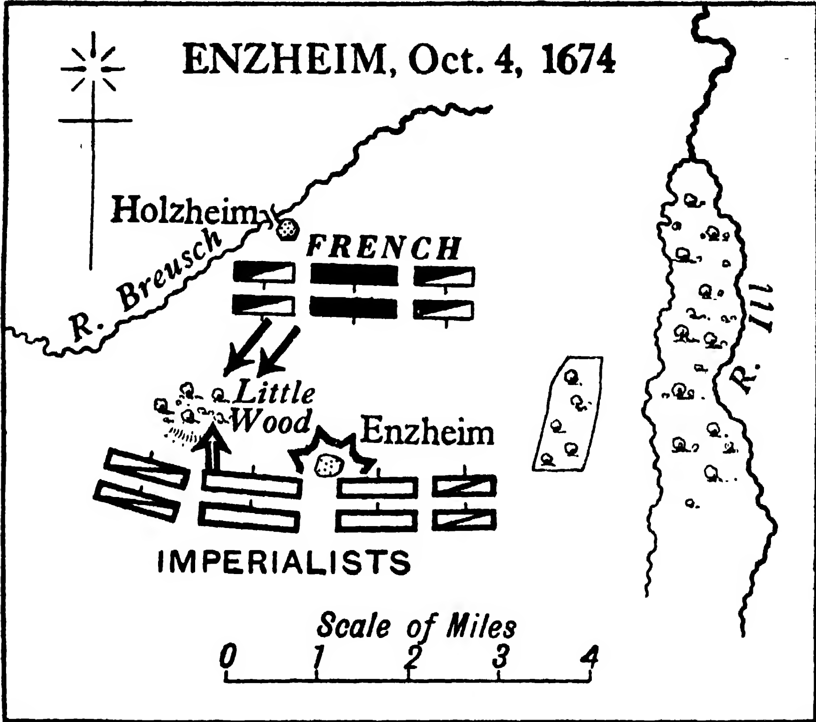
> It would be indeed difficult for me to forget you, Monseigneur, and I have an indispensable duty to remember all my life the kindness which you showed me in Metz *thirty-four years ago.*[2] You were very young then, Monseigneur, but you gave already by your excellent qualities the hope of that valour, politeness and conduct which have raised you with justice to the rank where you command all men. And what is more glorious, Monseigneur, is that the whole world, friends and enemies, bear witness to the truth of what I have the honour to write; and I have no doubt that it was your generosity on my account which [then] made itself felt, because the troops who came and burnt everything around my land at Mezeray in the plain spared my estate, saying that they were so ordered by high authority.[3]

Whether this letter stirred some scented memory, long cherished in Churchill's retentive mind, which after the lapse of thirty-four years would make the shielding of this little plot and homestead from the ravages of war an incident he would not forget, we cannot tell. We think, however, that the widow is wrong in her dates. It is, of course, possible—though the evidence is against it—that Churchill was in Metz on some military duty in 1677. But it is far more likely that the letter refers to the year 1674, when indeed the troops "came and burnt everything around . . . Mezeray."

There is no dispute, however, about Churchill's presence at the head of his regiment in the battle of Enzheim in October. Here all is certain and grim. We have one of his matter-of-fact letters written to Monmouth about the action. We have also a much fuller account by the future Lord Feversham. Turenne had ten thousand horse and twelve thousand foot against enemy forces almost double. Nevertheless, he crossed the Breusch river and attacked the Imperialists

[1] *Cf.* J. Revol, *Turenne*, pp. 316 *seq.* [2] Author's italics. [3] Coxe, i, 8 *n.*

by surprise. All turned upon what was called the 'Little Wood,' which lay on the French right between the armies. The development of the main action depended on who held the wood, and the fight for it constituted the crux of the battle. A competent French colonel, Boufflers by name, whom we shall meet several times in higher situations later, was sent to clear the wood with his dragoons.



He could make no headway, and resigned his effort to the infantry. Both sides began to cram battalions into the wood. The French rarely stint their own, and never their allies' blood; and the brunt of Turenne's battle was borne by the hired troops. Dongan's battalion of Hamilton's Irish regiment, the third battalion of Monmouth's Royal English, and Churchill's battalion were successively thrown into the struggle. Duras (Feversham) wrote, "One and all assuredly accomplished marvels." They certainly suffered most severe losses. Churchill's battalion, which was the last to engage, had half its officers killed or wounded in the Little Wood. The rest of the island mercenaries suffered almost as heavily in this and

other parts of the field. The three squadrons of Monmouth's horse charged the Imperialists who were attacking the French left and centre at a critical moment, and won much honour with almost total destruction. Turenne bivouacked on the field, claiming a victory at heavy odds, and his strategic theme was vindicated. But the battle must take its place in that large category 'bloody and indecisive.'

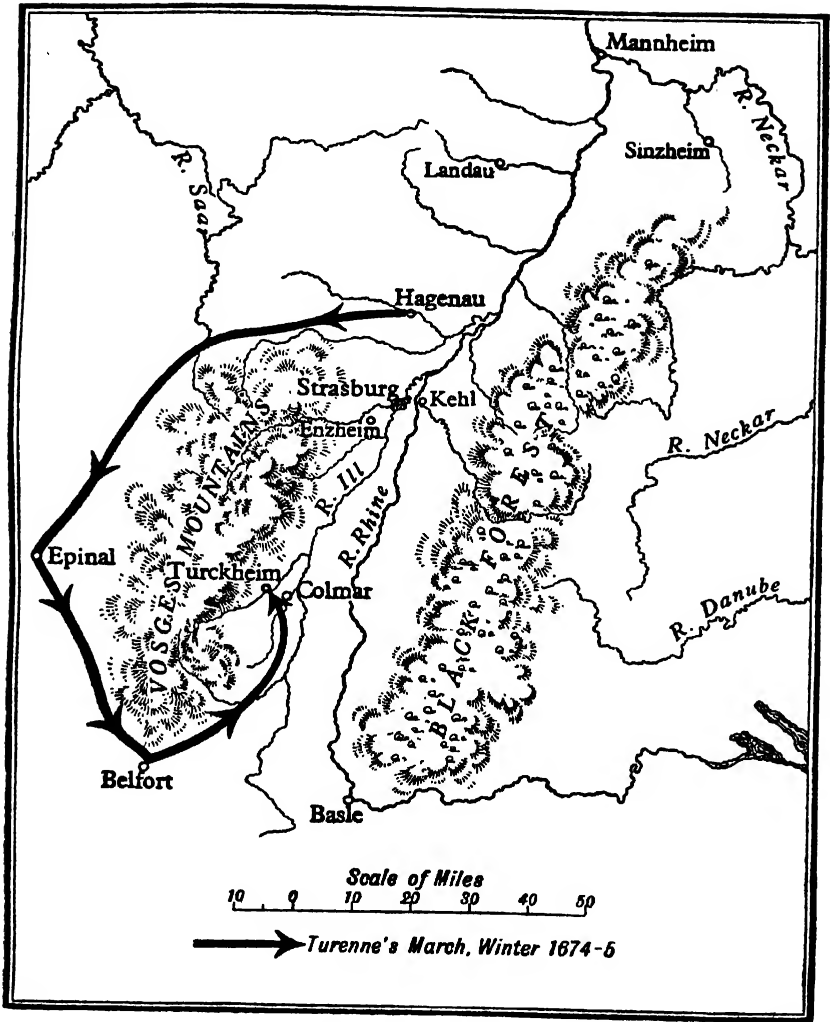
Feversham, reporting to the Government, wrote, "No one in the world could possibly have done better than Mr Churchill has done and M. de Turenne is very well pleased with all our nation." Turenne also mentioned Churchill and his battalion in his despatches. It was a very rough, savage fight in a cause not reconcilable with any English interest. We print in full Churchill's report to Monmouth because it shows an aspect of his character. Nothing is spent in trappings and explanations. It gives a bald, dour recital of such service facts as it was necessary that Monmouth should know. Its restraint does not conceal the resentment of a Colonel whose soldiers have been ill-used and slaughtered in a foreign quarrel.[1]

Sept. 25/*Oct.* 5, 1674

COL. JOHN CHURCHILL TO THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH

The 4th of this month M. de Turenne proffered battle to the enemies' army, but they would not advance out of their post to fight us, though they were much stronger, so we were forced to attack them as well as we could. The enemy had a village in their rear and a wood in their front, so M. de Turenne made 8 battalions of us and the dragoons to march out into the wood and push till we came to the head of it, where they had a battery of 5 cannon, which we beat them from and took the cannon and afterwards pushed their foot about 100 yards from the wood's side, so that there was room for squadrons of horse to draw up with us, which being done, we advanced towards them, and beat them out of that post, which was a very good ditch; which being done M. de Vaubrun, one of our lieutenant-generals, commanded us to guard that, and advance no forwarder so that we advanced all that day afterward no forwarder. Half of our foot was so posted that they did not fight at all. Your Grace's last battalion was on this attack, and both those of Hamilton and mine, so we have lost a great many officers, Hamilton, his brother and several others of his regiment. In your battalion Captains Cassels and Lee were killed and 2 wounded. I had Captain Dillon killed, Captains Piggott and Tute wounded, Lieutenants Butler and Mordant and Ensign Donmere wounded, and Lieutenants Watts, Howard, Tucker and Field killed. I had with me but 22 officers, of which I have given your Grace account of 11. Yet

[1] *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1674–75, p. 367. *Cf.* Atkinson, pp. 55 *seq.*



TURENNE'S MARCH

your regiment of horse was used much worse than we, for Lieut.-colonel Littleton, Captain Gremes and Sheldon and 4 cornets with several lieutenants were killed. The Major, Captain Kirke and most of the officers not killed are wounded, and above half the regiment lost with also several of their colours.

I durst not brag much of our victory, but it is certain they left the field as soon as we. We have three of their cannon and several of their colours and some prisoners. The village where the battle was fought is called Waldheim.

Even before the battle it seems likely that Churchill was well esteemed in the army. We find him selected by Turenne with five hundred picked men for an attack upon the Imperialist rearguard at a moment when it was recrossing the Rhine. But only here and there does his figure catch a fleeting gleam. Lots of others, for whom no one has rummaged, did as well. All that can be said is that he did his duty and bore a solid reputation in this hard-pressed, over-weighted, and yet victorious army. There is no doubt that he fought too in the mid-winter attack on Turckheim. In those days the armies reposed from October till April, the condition of such roads as there were alone imposing immobility upon them; but Turenne, starting from Hagenau on November 19, broke into the Imperialist cantonments, and after cutting up various detachments gained a considerable success on Christmas Day. Churchill's regiment marched with him. Duras and other English officers had already been given leave to Paris, it being essential to Turenne's design to pretend that the year's campaign was over. Although a letter on December 15 states that Churchill was daily expected in Paris, he was certainly with the troops.[1]

It is customary to say that he learned the art of war from Turenne, and attempts have been made to draw comparisons between the attacks across the Breusch at Enzheim and across the Nebel at Blenheim. This is going too far. No competent officer of that age could watch the composed genius of Turenne in action without being enriched thereby. But no battle ever repeats itself. The success of a commander does not arise from following rules or models. It consists in an absolutely new comprehension of the dominant facts of the situation at the time, and all the forces at work. Cooks use recipes for dishes and doctors have prescriptions for diseases, but every great operation of war is unique. The kind of intelligence capable of grasping in its complete integrity what is actually

[1] S.P., 78/139, *cf.* ff. 145, 172.

happening in the field is not taught by the tactics of commanders on one side or the other—though these may train the mind—but by a profound appreciation of the actual event. There is no surer road to ill-success in war than to imitate the plans of bygone heroes and to fit them to novel situations. The Enzheim letter is by no means a tribute of admiration to Turenne. On the contrary, the laconic remark, "Half of our foot was so posted that they did not fight at all," is a damaging criticism of an action fought necessarily against superior forces. It comes with peculiar weight from Churchill, who knew so well how to keep unhelpful opinions to himself and hardly ever committed them to paper. We do not know what part, other than has been described, Churchill played in these campaigns. But he must have been thinking intensely about war ever since he came of age, and he certainly had many opportunities of watching it at close quarters under one of its most famous masters, and of learning in a responsible but subordinate position every detail of active service.

Chapter Seven

SARAH

1675–1676

IN the early seventies a new star began to shine in the constellations of the English Court. Frances Jennings—"la belle Jenyns" of Grammont—beautiful as "Aurora or the promise of Spring," haughty, correct, mistress of herself, became a waiting-woman of the Duchess of York. She soon had no lack of suitors. The Duke himself cast favourable glances towards her, which were suavely but firmly deflected. Fair and impregnable, she shone upon that merry, easy-going, pleasure-loving society.

Her father, Richard Jennings, of Sandridge, came of a Somersetshire family who, though long entitled to bear arms, had no crest before the reign of King Henry VIII. For some time they had been settled in Hertfordshire, near St Albans, at Holywell House, on the banks of the Ver. Her grandfather was High Sheriff of Herts in 1625, and, like his son Richard, was repeatedly returned to the House of Commons as Member for St Albans. Their property also included land in Somersetshire and Kent, and may have amounted at this period to about £4000 a year. Curiously enough—in after-light—the Manor of Churchill, in Somersetshire, was, as we have seen, in the possession of the Jennings family for a hundred years.

About Frances Jennings' widowed mother various report exists. We find references in Somersetshire letters to "your noble mother." In *The New Atlantis* she is described as a sorceress: "the famous Mother Shipton, who by the power and influence of her magic art had placed her daughter in the Court." She certainly bore a questionable reputation, suffered from a violent temper, and found in St James's Palace, where she had apartments, a refuge from hungry creditors who, armed with the law, bayed outside.

In 1673 Frances brought her younger sister Sarah, a child of twelve, into the Court circle. She too was attached to the household of the Duke of York. There she grew up, and at the mature age of fifteen was already a precocious, charming figure. She was not so dazzling as her sister, but she had a brilliancy all her own; fair,

flaxen hair, blue eyes sparkling with vivacity, a clear, rosy complexion, firm, engaging lips, and a nose well chiselled, but with a slightly audacious upward tilt. She also, from her tenderest years, was entirely self-possessed and self-confident, and by inheritance she owned, when roused, the temper of the devil.

Towards the end of 1675 she began to dance with John Churchill at balls and parties. He, of course, must have been acquainted with her ever since she arrived at St James's, but after one night of dancing at the end of that year they fell in love with each other. It was a case of love, not at first sight indeed, but at first recognition. It lasted for ever; neither of them thenceforward loved anyone else in their whole lives, though Sarah hated many. The courtship was obstructed and prolonged. Meanwhile Sarah grew to her beauty and power, and her personality, full of force, woman's wiles, and masculine sagacity, became manifest.

She soon quarrelled with her mother. "Mrs. Jennings and her daughter, Maid of Honour to the Dutchesse," says a contemporary letter,

> have had so great a falling out that they fought; the young one complained to the Dutchesse that if her mother was not put out of St James's where she had lodgings to sanctuary her from debt, she would run away; so Sir Alleyn Apsley was sent to bid the mother remove, who answered "with all her heart; she should never dispute the Duke and Dutchesse's commands, but with the Grace of God she would take her daughter away with her." . . . So rather than part with her, the mother must stay, and all breaches are made up again.[1]

But this was only the first round; and a month later we read:

> Mrs [Mistress] Sarah Jennings has got the better of her mother, who is commanded to leave the Court and her daughter in itt, notwithstanding the mother's petition, that she might have her girle with her, the girle saying she is a mad woman.

However, once the eviction had taken place relations were restored between mother and daughter, and they seem to have been attached to one another so long as they dwelt apart.[2]

[1] Rutland Papers, *H.M.C.*, XII, ii, 32, 34.

[2] Among the Blenheim MSS. there are a few letters, written from Sarah to her mother after her marriage, which show the terms on which they lived.

Sarah Churchill to Mrs Jennings

"I have thought very often since I left, dear Mother, what was the reason of all the disorder and ill humour the night and morning before I came away; and if I thought I had done anything that you had reason to take ill I should be very angry

Such is the first we hear of the young lady who now entered John Churchill's life and was eventually to play as large a part in English history as any woman not a sovereign. It is odd that, in spite of all the glare which has beaten upon the story of Sarah Jennings, we do not know with certitude either the house in which she was born, nor that in which she was married to John, nor even the house in which—octogenarian, millionairess, and world figure—she died. Lengthy arguments are exchanged by her train of biographers on all these simple points of fact. Still, it seems probable that she died in London, and she is known to have been born at St Albans, which she always calls "her native town."

At Blenheim Palace there is a bundle of thirty-seven love-letters of John and Sarah covering a period of about three years, from 1675 to 1677. All are unsigned and all are provokingly undated. All but eight are his. Her contributions are short, severe, and almost repellent. She must have written many more letters, and it is surmised that these were in a more tender vein. She seems, however, only to have kept copies of her warlike missives. She asked him to destroy all her letters, and he must have done so, for none survives except this bundle of thirty-seven, of which hers are copies and his only are originals. In her old age the Duchess several times fondled and reread this correspondence. Her own letters are endorsed in her handwriting, "Some coppys of my letters to Mr Churchill before I was married & not more than 15 years old." She left a request that her chief woman-in-waiting, or secretary, Grace Ridley, should after her death be given the letters in order that she might "burn without reading them." There is an endorsement in the quivering hand of age stating that she had read over all these letters in 1736. Finally, the year before her death, "Read over in 1743 desiring to burn them, but I could not doe it."

The reader shall be the judge of the correspondence.[1] The first batch consists entirely of John's letters.

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with myself, but I am very sure I did not intend anything but give you the duty I ought, and if against my will and knowledge I have committed any fault I hope you will forgive it and I beg you will consider how often I stopped the coach as we came home and begged you to come in which I could do for no other reason but for leave [fear] you should get your death, and what reason had you when you came here to say so many cruel things to me and Betty Moody [Mowdie] which I can't but take to myself. The post is going and I can say no more but that I hope I shall see you or hear from you very soon, and that I will ever be your most dutiful daughter whatever you are to me. "CHURCHILL"

[1] The letters are here printed from the originals in the Blenheim MSS. with the spelling and punctuation modernized. Those hitherto unpublished are marked with an asterisk.

John to Sarah

*My Soul, I love you so truly well that I hope you will be so kind as to let me see you somewhere to-day, since you will not be at Whitehall. I will not name any time, for all hours are alike to me when you will bless me with your sight. You are, and ever shall be, the dear object of my life, for by heavens I will never love anybody but yourself.

*I am just come and have no thought of any joy but that of seeing you. Wherefore I hope you will send me word that you will see me this night.

*My head did ache yesterday to that degree and I was so out of order that nothing should have persuaded me to have gone abroad but the meeting of you who is much dearer than all the world besides to me. If you are not otherwise engaged, I beg you will give me leave to come at eight o'clock.

*I fancy by this time that you are awake, which makes me now send to know how you do, and if your foot will permit you to give me the joy of seeing you in the drawing-room this night. Pray let me hear from you, for when I am not with you, the only joy I have is hearing from you.

*My Soul, it is a cruel thing to be forced in a place when I have no hopes of seeing you, for on my word last night seemed very tedious to me; wherefore I beg you will be so kind to me as to come as often as you can this week, since I am forced to wait [to be in waiting]. I hope you will send me word that you are well and that I shall see you here to-night.

*The reason that I write thus early to you is for fear you should be gone abroad, and this would be a very long day, if you should be so unkind as not to write. I hope, although you do go to Mrs Fortrey, that you will be dressed at night, so that I may see you in the drawing-room. Pray write two words before you go. You ought to do it, for I love you with all my heart and soul.

*I did no sooner know that you were not well, but upon my faith without affectation I was also sick. I hope your keeping your bed yesterday and this night has made you perfectly well, which if it has, I beg that I may then have leave to see you to-night at eight, for believe me that it is an age since I was with you. I do love you so well that I have no patience when I have not hopes of seeing my dear angel, wherefore pray send me word that I shall be blessed and come at eight, till when, my Soul, I will do nothing else but think kindly of you.

*I was so sick all day yesterday that I would have got somebody to have written for me, but the desire I had to see you made me endure all and wait. If you will be at Mrs Berkley's or anywhere else this afternoon where I may see you I will come, if you send me word what hour.

*I hope you were so wise as to value your own health before your duty to the Duchess, so that you did not walk with her at five this morning.

I hope your sitting up has done you no harm, so that you will see me this afternoon, for upon my soul I do love you with all my heart and take joy in nothing but yourself. I do love you with all the truth imaginable, but have patience but for one week, you shall then see that I will never more do aught that shall look like a fault.

If your happiness can depend upon the esteem and love I have for you, you ought to be the happiest thing breathing, for I have never anybody loved to that height I do you. I love you so well that your happiness I prefer much above my own; and if you think meeting me is what you ought not to do, or that it will disquiet you, I do promise you I will never press you more to do it. As I prefer your happiness above my own, so I hope you will sometimes think how well I love you; and what you can do without doing yourself an injury, I hope you will be so kind as to do it—I mean in letting me see that you wish me better than the rest of mankind; and in return I swear to you that I never will love anything but your dear self, which has made so sure a conquest of me that, had I the will, I have not the power ever to break my chains. Pray let me hear from you, and know if I shall be so happy as to see you to-night.

I was last night at the ball, in hopes to have seen what I love above my own soul, but I was not so happy, for I could see you nowhere, so that I did not stay above an hour. I would have written sooner, but that I was afraid you went to bed so late that it would disturb you.

Pray see which of these two puppies you like best, and that keep; for the bitch cannot let them suck any longer. They are above three weeks old, so that if you give it warm milk it will not die. Pray let me hear from you, and at what time you will be so kind as to let me come to you to-night. Pray, if you have nothing to do, let it be the latest [earliest], for I never am truly happy but when I am with you.

We now see the falling of shadows upon the sunlit path. We cannot tell their cause, whether they come from passing clouds or from some solid obstruction. We do not know the reason, nor even the year. We must realize that these written fragments, luckily preserved, represent only a tiny part of all that happened in nearly a thousand days of two young lives.

*I stayed last night in the drawing-room expecting your coming back, for I could have wished that we had not parted until you had given me hopes of seeing you, for, my soul, there is no pain so great to me, as that when I fear you do not love me; but I hope I shall never live to see you less kind to me than you are. I am sure I will never deserve it, for I will by all that is good love you as long as I live. I beg you will let me see you as often as you can, which I am sure you ought to do if you care for my love, since every time I see you I still find new charms in you; therefore do not be so ill-natured as to believe any lies that may be told you of me, for on my faith I do not only now love you but do desire to do it as long as I live. If you can have time before you go to church, pray let me hear from you.

*I was last night above an hour in the Bedchamber still expecting every one that came in it should be you, but at last I went to Mrs Brownley's, where I found Mrs Mowdie,[1] who told me that you were with your sister, so that you would not be seen that night; so I went to Whitehall to find out the Duke, for when I know that you will not appear I do not care to be at St James's. For 'tis you and you only I care to see, for by all that is good I do with all the truth imaginable love you. Pray let me hear from you, and I beg that I may be blessed this night in being with you. I hope you will like the waistcoat; I do assure you there is not such another to be had in England.

*My Lord Mulgrave's page is come to let me know that they stay for me, but I cannot stir before I write to know how you do, and if you will be at Mrs Berkley's and whether you would have me come or no, for I will never do aught that you will not have me do.

My Soul, I go with the heaviest heart that ever man did, for by all that is good I love you with all my heart and soul, and I am sure that as long as I live you shall have no just reason to believe the contrary. If you are unkind, I love [you] so well that I cannot live, for you are my life, my soul, my all that I hold dear in this world; therefore do not make so ungrateful a return as not to write. If you have charity you will not only write, but you will write kindly, for it is on you that depends the quiet of my soul. Had I fitting words to express my love, it would not then be in your power to refuse what I beg with tears in my eyes, that you would love me as I will by heavens do you.

To show you how unreasonable you are in accusing me, I dare swear you yourself will own that your going from me in the Duchess's drawing-room did show as much contempt as was possible. I may grieve at it, but I will no more complain when you do it, for I suppose it is what pleases your humour. I cannot imagine what you meant

[1] Mrs Mowdie was Sarah's waiting-woman and to some extent chaperone.

I am just come, and have
noe thoughts of anny Joye,
but that of seeing you,
wherefore I hope you will
send me word that you
will see me this night,

FRAGMENT FROM ONE OF MARLBOROUGH'S LOVE-LETTERS

Blenheim MSS.

> by your saying I laughed at you at the Duke's side, for I was so far from that, that had it not been for shame I could have cried. And [as] for being in haste to go to the Park, after you went, I stood near a quarter of an hour, I believe, without knowing what I did. Although at Whitehall you told me I should not come, yet I walked twice to the Duke's back-stairs, but there was no Mrs Mowdie; and when I went to my Lord Duras's, I would not go the same way they did but came again down the back-stairs; and when I went away, I did not go in my chair, but made it follow me, because I would see if there was any light in your chamber, but I saw none. Could you see my heart you would not be so cruel as to say I do not love you, for by all that is good I love you and only you. If I may have the happiness of seeing you to-night, pray let me know, and believe that I am never truly pleased but when I am with you.

Thus time slipped by, and ardent courtship must have lasted far into its second year. Sarah's sister Frances, after rejecting so many suitors, royal or honourable, was already married to Lord Hamilton, a man of charm and distinction, but of no great wealth. Sarah, approaching seventeen, was alone. She had chased away her mother, and the man she loved and who loved her so well had not yet spoken the decisive word.

Meanwhile the war continued; but such few records of John Churchill as exist for the years 1675, 1676, and 1677 are conclusive against his having fought any more on the Continent. His name is never mentioned in any of the operations.[1] The regiment which he had formerly commanded, withering for lack of drafts, was incorporated in Monmouth's Royal English regiment in May 1675. It is therefore almost certain that he took no part in this year's campaign either with Turenne or elsewhere.[2]

In August we read of him hastening to Paris. We can but guess at his mission. Since 1673 he had been Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York. On August 9, 1675, the French Ambassador in England wrote to Louis XIV describing an interview with James at which the Duke had asked for an immediate subsidy from the French King to free his brother from the need of summoning Parliament.[3] In view of the fact that four years later

[1] On April 13, 1675, the Jesuit Father St Germaine wrote from Flanders to his correspondent in England, "I have wrote many times these three months about being assured that neither Churchill nor Clarke would come over any more, . . . but hearing nothing from you it makes me conclude . . . there is nothing to be done in it." (St Germaine to E. Coleman, April 13, 1675; *H.M.C.*, xiii, App. vi, p. 108.)

[2] *Cf.* Atkinson, pp. 65-66.

[3] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 116, ff. 173 *seq.*

James was to send Churchill over to Paris to make a similar request for a subsidy, and that he was already well known at Versailles, it is not unlikely that he was sent to Paris to reinforce his master's petition. A warrant showing that in October he had permission to import from France free of duty his silver plate seems to mark the end of his stay abroad.[1] In September 1676 he was a member of a court-martial convened in London to try an officer for an assault on the governor of Plymouth. There is therefore no doubt that he spent these years mainly at Court, and that he was increasingly employed in diplomatic work and at his ordinary duties in the Duke of York's household.

Towards the end of this year the Duke of Monmouth expressed his dissatisfaction with the Lieutenant-Colonel of his Royal English regiment, which was serving with the French Army against the Dutch, and proposed to Louis XIV that the command should be transferred to Churchill. Justin MacCartie, a nephew of the Duke of Ormonde, who when an ensign had accompanied Feversham to the siege of Maestricht, also sought this appointment. Courtin, the French Ambassador, laid the situation before Louvois, together with elaborate and scandalous accounts of John's love-affairs. Louvois replied that Churchill appeared to be too much taken up with the ladies to devote his whole-hearted affection to a regiment. He would give, Louvois said, "more satisfaction to a rich and faded mistress, than to a monarch who did not want to have dishonourable and dishonoured carpet knights in his armies." Courtin, however, considered Churchill a far abler officer than his competitor, and the post was undoubtedly offered him. It was Churchill who refused. "Mr Churchill," reported the Ambassador, whose news was now certainly up to date, "prefers to serve the very pretty sister [Sarah Jennings] of Lady Hamilton than to be lieutenant-colonel in Monmouth's regiment."[2]

This phase in Churchill's life is significant. It marks more clearly

[1] *C.S.P.* (*Treasury Books*), 1672–75, p. 830, describes the contents of Churchill's two trunks of silver recently brought out of France in October—to wit, "one basin, 2 great dishes, 12 small dishes, 2 massarines, 3 doz. of plates, 2 flagons, 4 candlesticks, 2 ewers, 2 stands, 2 chafing dishes, 1 vinegar pot, 1 sugar pot, 1 mustard pot, 1 pair of snuffers and its case, 4 salts, 6 cups, 12 spoons, 12 forks, 12 hafts, one great spoon, one chamber pot, one tea pot, one chocolate pot, one great cup, one skillet, 2 Turkey cups." Several pieces of this plate of French make are still preserved at Althorp.

[2] November 19/29, 1676. *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 120 C, f. 231; *cf.* ff. 206, 248, etc. This account is based on the original letters in the French Foreign Office, and corrects erroneous accounts in Wolseley and in Forneron's *Louise de Kéroualle*. Wolseley, indeed, places part of this story in 1674 and part in 1676.

than anything else the intensity of his passion for Sarah, before which adventure, ambition, and "lucre" alike lost their power. There may, of course, have been more general reasons as well for his not wishing to take further service under the French. He had probably begun to share the prejudices of most Englishmen of this time against Louis XIV's assaults on the Protestant Dutch. He had experienced at Enzheim the French profusion with their hired troops. Better to "sport with Amaryllis in the shade" than lease himself as a French popinjay! Anyhow, he refused. Mars was quite decidedly set aside for Venus. However, the estrangement was not final.

During this same year, 1676, Sir Winston Churchill and his wife became concerned at the attachment of their son to Sarah Jennings. They did not see how he could make a career for himself unless he married money. To this, with his looks and prowess, he might well aspire. They fixed their eyes upon Catharine Sedley, daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Sedley, a man renowned for his wit and his wealth. Catharine Sedley was also of the household of the Duke of York. By some accounts she was tall, plain, thin, angular, but had a pair of fine eyes. Her portrait, however, is by no means unprepossessing; and she already inherited her father's caustic wit. She exerted her attractions in her own way, and, though not admired, was both liked and feared. Ultimately, after the parental hopes had failed to unite her to John Churchill, she became, in what seemed almost rotation for the maids of honour, the Duke of York's mistress. Although she was a staunch Protestant with an unconcealed scorn of priests and Papists, he was for some years devoted to her, and a time was to come when she seemed about to play a decisive part in politics. Several of her sayings have been preserved. When, after the Revolution, Queen Mary slighted her at Court, she boldly reproached her, saying, "Remember, ma'am, if I broke one of the commandments *with* your father, you have broken another *against* him." Speaking generally of James II's mistresses, including Arabella, Lady Bellasis, and herself, she remarked with much detachment, "What he saw in any of us, I cannot tell. We were all plain, and if any of us had had wit, he would not have understood it." Altogether she was by no means a negligible personality, and had treasures of her own to bestow besides her father's fortune.

The news of these parental machinations must have been swiftly carried to Sarah. How far, if at all, John lent himself to them, at what point they begin to darken the love-letters, we cannot tell. Certainly the arguments which Sir Winston and his wife could

deploy were as serious and matter-of-fact as any which could ever be brought to bear upon a son. We may imagine some of them.

"You have your foot on the ladder of fortune. You have already mounted several important rungs. Every one says you have a great future before you. Every one knows you have not got—apart from the annuity or your pay—a penny behind you. How can you on a mere whim compromise your whole future life? Catharine Sedley is known to be a most agreeable woman. She holds her own in any company. The Duke listens to all she says, and the whole Court laughs at her jests. She is asked everywhere. Women have beauties of mind quite as attractive, except to enamoured youth, as those of body. Sir Charles is a really wealthy man, solid, long-established, with fine houses, broad acres, and failing health. She is his only child. With his fortune and her humour and sagacity behind you, all these anxieties which have gnawed your life, all that poverty which has pursued us since your infancy, would be swept away. You could look any man in the face and your career would be assured.

"Moreover, do you really think this little Jennings could be a companion to you? Although she is only a child, little more than half your age, she has proved herself a spitfire and a termagant. Look at the way she treats you—as if you were a lackey. You have told us enough of your relations with her—and, indeed, it is the talk of the Court—to show that she is just humiliating you, twirling you round her finger for her own glorification. Did she not say only last week to So-and-so how she could make you do this, that, or anything? Even if she had all Catharine's money we would beg you for your peace of mind, with all the experience of the older generation, not to take this foolish step. It would be a decision utterly out of keeping with your character, with your frugal life—never throwing any expense on us, always living within your income—with all your prudence and care for the future. You would be committing a folly, and the one kind of folly we were always sure you would never commit.

"Lastly, think of her. Are you really doing her justice in marrying her? She has come to Court under good protection. She could never hold a candle to her sister, but she may well hope to marry into the peerage. There is the Earl of Lindsay, who could give her a fine position. He is paying her a great deal of attention. Would she ever be happy with love in a cottage? Would she not drag you down and sink with you?" "Believe me, my son, I, your father,"

Sir Winston might have said, "pillaged by the Roundheads, uprooted from my lands for my loyalty, have had a hard time. I can give nothing to you or your bride but the shelter of my roof at Mintern. You know how we live there. How would she put up with that? We have never been able to do more than hold up our heads. These are rough times. They are not getting better. By yielding to this absurd fancy you will ruin her life as well as your own, and throw a burden upon us which, as you know, we cannot bear. I am to meet Sir Charles next week. He is a great believer in you. He has heard things about you from the French. It is said that among the younger men none is your master in the land service. I never commanded more than a cavalry troop, but you at half my age are almost a general. But are you not throwing away your military career as well?"

How far did John yield to all this? He was no paragon. All around was the corrupt, intriguing Court with its busy marriage market. In those days English parents disposed their children's fortunes much as the French do now. Winston himself had perhaps been betrothed at fourteen or fifteen, and had made a happy, successful family life. We do not believe that John ever weakened in his purpose. Certainly he never wavered in his love. No doubt he weighed with deep anxiety the course which he should take. All the habit of his mind was far-sighted. "In the bloom of his youth," says Macaulay, "he loved lucre more than wine or women." However, he loved Sarah more than all. But how were they to live? This was the cold, brutal, commonplace, inexorable question that baffled his judgment and tied his tongue.

Her situation, as she learned about the family negotiations and saw her lover oppressed and abstracted, was cruel. Already, with discerning feminine eye, she had marked him for her own. Now wealth and worldly wisdom were to intervene and snatch him from her. Already barriers seemed to be growing between them, and it was here that the vital truth of her purpose saved all. Weakness on her part in dealing with him might perhaps have been fatal. She maintained towards him a steady, bayonet-bristling front. Between perfect love, absolute unity, and scorn and fury such as few souls are capable of, there was no middle choice. Sometimes, indeed, her ordeal in public was more than she could bear. Scores of peering, knowing eyes were upon her. Her tears were seen at some revel, and the French Ambassador wrote a sneering letter about them for the gossips of Versailles.

> *There was a small ball last Friday at the Duchess of York's where Lady Hamilton's sister who is uncommonly good-looking had far more wish to cry than to dance. Churchill who is her suitor says that he is attacked by consumption and must take the air in France. I only wish I were as well as he. The truth is that he wishes to free himself from intrigues. His father urges him to marry one of his relations who is very rich and very ugly, and will not consent to his marriage with Miss Jennings. He is also said to be not a little avaricious and I hear from the various Court ladies that he has pillaged the Duchess of Cleveland, and that she had given him more than the value of 100,000 livres. They make out that it is he who has quitted her and that she has taken herself off in chagrin to France to rearrange her affairs. If Churchill crosses the sea, she will be able to patch things up with him. Meanwhile she writes agreeably to the Duchess of Sussex conjuring her to go with her husband to the country and to follow her advice but not her example.[1]

Thus Courtin. We must make allowance for his own love of scandal, and for the palates he sought to spice: but here, at any rate, we have a definite situation. Courtin's letter is dated November 27, 1676. We see that John's relations with Barbara have ended; that his father is pressing him to marry Catharine Sedley; that he is deeply in love with Sarah, but does not feel justified in his poverty in proposing marriage; that she is indignant at his delay and miserable about the other women and all the uncertainty and the gossip. We see her magnificent in her prolonged ordeal. We see John for the only time in these pages meditating flight from a field the difficulties of which seemed for the moment beyond his sagacious strength. Well is it said that the course of true love never did run smooth. The next chapter will, however, carry the lovers to their hearts' desire.

[1] Courtin to Louvois, November 27/December 7, 1676; *Correspondance politique. Angleterre*, t. 120 C, f. 248.

Chapter Eight

MARRIAGE

1676–1678

WE now approach the delicate question of how John freed himself from the Duchess of Cleveland. Unquestionably towards the end of 1676 he quitted Barbara for Sarah. Was he "off with the old love before he was on with the new"? Or was it one of those familiar dissolving views, where one picture fades gradually away and the other grows into gleaming, vivid life? Gossip and scandal there is a-plenty; evidence there is none. Of course, a married woman separated from her husband, unfaithful to him, notoriously licentious, who has a young man in the twenties as her lover, must expect that a time will come when her gay companion will turn serious, when all the charms and pleasures she can bestow will pall and cloy, and when he will obey the mysterious command of a man's spirit to unite himself for ever, by every tie which nature and faith can proffer, to a being all his own. But Barbara took it very ill, and after a brief attempt to console herself with Wycherley, the playwright, she withdrew from England altogether and took up her abode in Paris. Here she became intimate with Montagu, the English Ambassador already mentioned, with results which after a while emerged upon the stage of history.

We cannot dismiss this topic without recourse to Mrs Manley. She is voluble where trustworthy records are silent upon this transference of Churchill's affections. She throws light of a certain character where the lamps of truth are dim. In her masterpieces, *The New Atlantis* and *Queen Zarah*, she gives two mutually destructive accounts of the breach between John and Barbara. *The New Atlantis* describes how Churchill, tired of the Duchess of Cleveland and having fallen in love with Sarah Jennings, used the following stratagem to give himself the best of the argument.

He persuaded a young lord—Mrs Manley says Lord Dover, but this is plainly impossible—who was Barbara's ardent admirer to lodge in his apartments. One day after his bath, when he was in

scanty attire upon the couch, with his face concealed, apparently sleeping, Barbara, coming to see John, entered the room. Macaulay's witness, Mrs Manley, asserts that, struck by the beauty of the young lord's form, she embraced him, and that not until much had passed did his voice recall her to the fact that he was a comparative stranger. Hot-foot upon this surprise came a knocking at the door. Churchill broke in and, suitably scandalized at the scene, delivered himself up to transports of simulated fury. He averred that she was the most inconstant of women, that he would never see her again, and would that very day marry Sarah Jennings, of whom she was already jealous. On which he departed, free. Such is Mrs Manley's first account.

The second account, published some years after in *Queen Zarah*, is different.[1] The technique is the same, but the facts are opposite. The parts played by the characters and their sexes are reversed. Here the tale begins with Sarah deeply in love with John. She has met him at balls and parties where he was so attractive and danced so well that "every step he took carried death with it." Sarah's mother, represented by Mrs Manley as an experienced, disreputable woman, resolved to aid her daughter's sentiments. She therefore contrived to bring Barbara and Sarah together. Barbara, who took a great liking to Sarah and did not know that she was her rival, invited Sarah to her apartments—those beautiful, elegant rooms where she was wont in her ordinary duty to receive the King. Thither Sarah repaired, and as her hostess was late—lured away upon a pretext—for better security disrobed and got into bed. Again suddenly the door opened, and John on one of his customary visits to Barbara entered. Struck and inspired by Sarah's dazzling beauty, he immediately declared his overwhelming love for her. Thereupon once more the door opened, and this time it was her mother who appeared. She in her turn was scandalized. Alleging that her daughter was now hopelessly compromised, and urging that John had declared his love for her in her hearing, she demanded immediate marriage as the only method of preventing the humiliation of her daughter, and as the surest way by which John could sever once and for all the ties which bound him to Barbara. While the future Captain-General was temporarily disconcerted by this turn of events, Mrs Jennings produced a priest, and before anyone could say Jack Robinson the

[1] It is not quite certain that Mrs Manley was the author of *Queen Zarah*, but if she was not, the pamphlet was certainly a product of the same factory and by a scribe of the same kidney.

marriage ceremony was accomplished. The modern reader, accustomed to the Hollywood films, will have already foreseen the last act of the drama: the incursion of the Duchess of Cleveland, and her fury as she gradually discovered that her rival had been married to her lover in her own apartments, to which she had herself invited her.

We have set out these two tales as told by Mrs Manley in abridged and expurgated form. The reader may choose the one or the other, but evidently not both. Or, again, he may believe that these are only the lying inventions of a prurient and filthy-minded underworld, served up to those who relish them and paid for by party interest and political malice. We shall not attempt to sway his judgment. It wi d epend entirely upon his character.

Let us return to the love-letters, which plead John's cause to posterity, as well as to Sarah. The deadlock in their affairs continued, and she rightly challenged him to end it or to leave her.

Sarah to John

If it were true that you have that passion for me which you say you have, you would find out some way to make yourself happy—it is in your power. Therefore press me no more to see you, since it is what I cannot in honour approve of, and if I have done too much, be so just as to consider who was the cause of it.

John to Sarah

As for the power you say you have over yourself, I do no ways at all doubt of it, for I swear to you I do not think you love me, so that I am very easily persuaded that my letters have no charms for you, since I am so much a slave to your charms as to own to you that I love you above my own life, which by all that is holy I do. You must give me leave to beg that you will not condemn me for a vain fool that I did believe you did love me, since both you and your actions did oblige me to that belief in which heaven knows I took so much joy that from henceforward my life must be a torment to me for it. You say I pretend a passion to you when I have other things in my head. I cannot imagine what you mean by it, for I vow to God you do so entirely possess my thoughts that I think of nothing else in this world but your dear self. I do not, by all that is good, say this that I think it will move you to pity me, for I do despair of your love; but it is to let you see how unjust you are, and that I must ever love you as long as I have breath, do what you will. I do not expect in return that you should either write or speak to me, since you think it is what

may do you a prejudice; but I have a thing to beg which I hope you will not be so barbarous as to deny me. It is that you will give me leave to do what I cannot help, which is to adore you as long as I live, and in return I will study how I may deserve, although not have, your love. I am persuaded that I have said impertinent things enough to anger you, for which I do with all my heart beg your pardon, and do assure you that from henceforward I will approach and think of you with the same devotion as to my God.

John to Sarah

You complain of my unkindness, but would not be kind yourself in answering my letter, although I begged you to do it. The Duchess goes to a new play to-day, and afterwards to the Duchess of Monmouth's, there to dance. I desire that you will not go thither, but make an excuse, and give me leave to come to you. Pray let me know what you do intend, and if you go to the play; for if you do, then I will do what I can to go, if [although] the Duke does not. Your not writing to me made me very uneasy, for I was afraid it was want of kindness in you, which I am sure I will never deserve by any action of mine.

Sarah to John

As for seeing you I am resolved I never will in private nor in public if I could help it. As for the last I fear it will be some time before I can order so as to be out of your way of seeing me. But surely you must confess that you have been the falsest creature[1] upon earth to me. I must own that I believe that I shall suffer a great deal of trouble, but I will bear it, and give God thanks, though too late I see my error.

Here the door is firmly closed, and then opened with a chink again.

John to Sarah

It is not reasonable that you should have a doubt but that I love you above all expression, which by heaven I do. It is not possible to do anything to let you see your power more than my obedience to your commands of leaving you, when my tyrant-heart aches me to make me disobey; but it were much better it should break than to displease you. I will not, dearest, ask or hope to hear from you unless your charity pities me and will so far plead for me as to tell you that a man dying for you may hope that you will be so kind to him as to make a distinction betwixt him and the rest of his sex. I do love and adore you with all my heart and soul—so much that by all that is

[1] Perhaps a reference to the Catharine Sedley episode.

good I do and ever will be better pleased with your happiness than my own; but oh, my soul, if we might be both happy, what inexpressible joy would that be! But I will not think of any content but what you shall think fit to give, for 'tis you alone I love, so that if you are kind but one minute, that will make me happier than all the world can besides. I will not dare to expect more favour than you shall think fit to give, but could you ever love me, I think the happiness would be so great that it would make me immortal.

Sarah to John

I am as little satisfied with this letter as I have been with many others, for I find all you will say is only to amuse me and make me think you have a passion for me, when in reality there is no such thing. You have reason to think it strange that I write to you after my last, where I protested that I would never write nor speak to you more; but as you know how much kindness I had for you, you can't wonder or blame me if I try once more, to hear what you can say for your justification. But this I must warn you of—that you don't hold disputes, as you have done always, and to keep me from answering of you, and yourself from saying what I expect from you, for if you go on in that manner I will leave you that moment, and never hear you speak more whilst I have life. Therefore pray consider if, with honour to me and satisfaction to yourself, I can see you; for if it be only to repeat those things which you said so oft, I shall think you the worst of men, and the most ungrateful; and 'tis to no purpose to imagine that I will be made ridiculous in the world when it is in your power to make me otherwise.

John to Sarah

Yours last night found me so sick that I thought I should have died, and I have now so excessive a headache that I should not stir out all day but that the Duchess has sent me word that the Duke will see me this afternoon, so that at night I shall have the happiness to see you in the drawing-room. I cannot remember what it was I said to you that you took so ill, but one thing I do assure you, that I will never say or do aught willingly that I think you may take ill. Ah, my soul, did you love so well as I, you could never have refused my letter so barbarously as you did, for if reason had bade you do it, love would never have permitted it. But I will complain no more of it, but hope time and the truth of my love will make you love better.

John to Sarah

I have been so extreme ill with the headache all this morning that I

have not had courage to write to know how you do; but your being well is what I prefer much above my own health. Therefore pray send me word, for if you are not in pain I cannot then be much troubled, for were it not for the joy I take in the thought that you love me, I should not care how soon I died; for by all that is good I love you so well that I wish from my soul that that minute that you leave loving me, that I may die, for life after that would be to me but one perpetual torment. If the Duchess sees company, I hope you will be there; but if she does not, I beg you will then let me see you in your chamber, if it be but for one hour. If you are not in the drawing-room, you must then send me word at what hour I shall come.

Sarah to John

At four o'clock I would see you, but that would hinder you from seeing the play, which I fear would be a great affliction to you, and increase the pain in your head, which would be out of anybody's power to ease until the next new play. Therefore, pray consider, and without any compliment to me, send me word if you can come to me without any prejudice to your health.

This unkind sarcasm drew probably the only resentful reply which John ever penned in all his correspondence with Sarah. The letter does not exist; but we can judge its character by his covering note to her waiting-woman, whose support he had doubtless enlisted.

Colonel John Churchill to Mrs Elizabeth Mowdie

Your mistress's usage to me is so barbarous that sure she must be the worst woman in the world, or else she would not be thus ill-natured. I have sent a letter which I desire you will give her. It is very reasonable for her to take it, because it will be then in her power never to be troubled with me more, if she pleases. I do love her with all my soul, but will not trouble her, for if I cannot have her love, I shall despise her pity. For the sake of what she has already done, let her read my letter and answer it, and not use me thus like a footman.

This was the climax of the correspondence. Sarah's response shows that she realized how deeply he was distressed and how critical their relations had become. She held out an offended hand, and he made haste to clasp it. Some days evidently passed before he wrote again, and this time his rebellious mood had vanished.

Sarah to John

I have done nothing to deserve such a kind of letter as you have

writ to me, and therefore I don't know what answer to give; but I find you have a very ill opinion of me, and therefore I can't help being angry with myself for having had too good a one of you; for if I had as little love as yourself, I have been told enough of you to make me hate you, and then I believe I should have been more happy than I am like to be now. However, if you can be so well contented never to see me as I think you can by what you say, I will believe you; though I have not other people; and after you are satisfied that I have not broke my word, you shall have it in your power to see me or not —and if you are contented without it I shall be extremely pleased.

John to Sarah

It would have been much kinder in you, if you had been pleased to have been so good-natured to have found time to have written to me yesterday, especially since you are resolved not to appear when I might see you. But I am resolved to take nothing ill but to be your slave as long as I live, and so to think all things well that you do.

This was the only surrender to which the Duke of Marlborough was ever forced. It was to the fan of a chit of seventeen. Moreover, so far as we have been able to ascertain, his courtship of Sarah affords the only occasions in his life of hazards and heart-shaking ordeals when he was ever frightened. Neither the heat of battle nor the long-drawn anxieties of conspiracy, neither the unsanctioned responsibilities of the march to the Danube nor the tortuous secret negotiations with the Jacobite Court, ever disturbed the poise of that calm, reasonable, resolute mind. But in this love-story we see him plainly panic-stricken. The terror that he and Sarah might miss one another, might drift apart, might pass and sail away like ships in the night, overpowered him. A man who cared less could have played this game of love with the sprightly Sarah much better than he. A little calculation, a little adroitness, some studied withdrawals, some counter-flirtation, all these were the arts which in every other field he used with innate skill. He has none of them now. He begs and prays with bald, homely, pitiful reiteration. We see the power of the light which sometimes shines upon the soul. These two belonged to one another, and, with all their faults, placarded as we know them, their union was true as few things of which we have experience here are true. And at this moment in the depth of his spirit, with the urge of uncounted generations pressing forward, he feared lest it might be cast away.

We now reach at least the year 1677, and with it the final phase of

the correspondence. It seems plain that they are engaged. The difficulties that remain are only those of time and means. He writes of an interview with his father, of the importance of Sarah not angering the Duchess of York, and of business arrangements for their future.

John to Sarah

It was unkind of you to go away last night since you knew that I came for no other purpose but to have the joy of seeing you, but I will not believe it was for want of love, for you are all goodness, the thought of which makes me love you above my own soul. If you shall be in the drawing-room to-night, send me word at what hour, so that I may order it so to be there at the same hour. I am now in my chamber, and will stay there as long as I can in hopes I may hear from you.

Sarah to John

I am willing to satisfy the world and you that I am not now in the wrong, and therefore I give you leave to come to-night—not that I can be persuaded you can ever justify yourself, but I do it that I may be freed from the troubles of ever hearing from you more.

John to Sarah

When I left my father last night, on purpose to come and speak with you, I did not believe that you would have been so unkind as to have gone away the minute I came in, fearing that I might else have spoke to you, which indeed I should have been very glad to have done. I beg you will give me leave to see you this night, at what hour you please. Pray let me hear from you, and if you do not think me impertinent for asking, I should be glad to know what made you go away.

John to Sarah

*I am just going to Richmond, but would not go until I had first paid my duty to you, who is and ever shall be the first thing in my thought. I shall come back time enough to be according as you appointed, but I believe it will be better if you let it be at ten, for I would be glad you would wait [be in waiting], you having not waited last night. I am sure if you love me, you will not at this anger the Duchess; therefore pray do wait, and be so kind to me as to believe that I have no thought but what is all kindness to you, for I despair

to live but to convince you how truly well I love you. Pray let me at my return find two words of answer.

John to Sarah

*You are very unjust in saying that I love you less than I did, for by all that is good I think I love better than ever I did. I am very sorry that you are not well and that I shall not see you to-day. I was three acts at the play for no other reason but that of seeing you. I was in the drawing-room almost an hour expecting you, which Mr Berkley can witness for me, for he was with me. I desire you will not choose any [trustees?] or do anything in that business until I speak with you. Pray be so kind to me as to write and assure me that you can be happy if I love you ever, as by heavens I will.

Frances, Lady Hamilton, had now arrived upon the scene, and Sarah seems to have threatened him with plans for going abroad with her.

John to Sarah

When I writ to you last night I thought I writ to the one that loved me; but your unkind, indifferent letter this morning confirms me of what I have before been afraid of, which is that your sister can govern your passion as she pleases. My heart is ready to break. I wish 'twere over, for since you are grown so indifferent, death is the only thing that can ease me. If that the Duchess could not have effected this, I was resolved to have made another proposal to her, which I am confident she might have effected, but it would not have brought so much money as this. But now I must think no more on it, since you say we cannot be happy. If they should do the first I wish with all my soul that my fortune had been so considerable as that it might have made you happier than your going out with your sister to France will do; for I know 'tis the joy you propose in that, that makes you think me faulty. I do, and must as long as I live, love you to distraction, but would not, to make myself the happiest man breathing, press you to ought that you think will make you unhappy. Madame, methinks it is no unreasonable request to beg to see you in your chamber to-night. Pray let me hear presently two words, and say I shall; and, in return, I swear to you if you command my death I will die."

This last is endorsed in Sarah's handwriting, "This letter was when he was to settle the time of marrying me with the Dutches." One by one, as in a methodical siege, he had removed the obstacles which had barred the way. He had put aside his military prospects.

Barbara was gone. Catharine was gone. The parents, still perhaps protesting, had given way. Evidently he had now in sight some means of livelihood sufficient for him and Sarah. Even now she did not soften her hectoring tone. But everything was settled.

Sarah to John

If your intentions are honourable,[1] and what I have reason to expect, you need not fear my sister's coming can make any change in me, or that it is in the power of anybody to alter me but yourself, and I am at this time satisfied that you will never do anything out of reason, which you must do if you ever are untrue to me.

Sarah to John

I have made many reflections upon what you said to me last night, and I am of the opinion that could the Duchess obtain what you ask her, you might be more unhappy than if it cannot be had. Therefore, as I have always shown more kindness for you than perhaps I ought, I am resolved to give you one mark more—and that is, to desire you to say nothing of it to the Duchess upon my account; and your own interest when I am not concerned in it, will probably compass what will make you much happier than this can ever do.

We now come to the marriage. No one knows exactly or for certain when or where it took place. For several months it was kept secret. That poverty rather than parental opposition was the cause is proved by a remarkable fact. John's grandfather had strictly entailed his estates, and Sir Winston was only tenant for life. He was heavily in debt, and was now forced to appeal to his son for help. Just at the moment when some assured prospects were most necessary to his heart's desire, John was asked to surrender his inheritance. He did so for his father's sake. Part of the property was realized, and Sir Winston's debts were paid. At his death the remnant went to the other children. John, therefore, by his own act disinherited himself.[2] This was a singular example of filial duty in a young man desperately in love and longing to marry.

He could not keep his wife in any suitable conditions at the Court. Once the marriage was announced all sorts of things would be expected. Mary of Modena, "the Dutchesse" of the letters, was the good fairy. She was the partisan of this love-match; she used all

[1] This phrase has been fastened on by some to suggest that Churchill was not seeking marriage. The natural sequence of the letters shows that he was at this very time arranging the basis of their future married life.

[2] See Appendix II.

her power to help the lovers. Evidently something had to be done to provide them with some means of living. Although Sarah had expectations, and John had his pay and, of course, his £500 a year, "the infamous wages," these were very small resources for the world in which they lived. The future Queen threw herself into the marriage, and her generous, feminine, and romantic instincts were stirred. "None but the brave," she might well have exclaimed, "deserves the fair." We have seen in the letters traces of various plans which the Duchess favoured or tried in order to make some provision for the lovers. We do not know what arrangements were made. Something, at any rate, was assured. Some time in the winter of 1677–78, probably in Mary of Modena's apartments, the sacred words were pronounced, and John and Sarah were man and wife. There is a strong local tradition at Newsells Park, Royston, Hertfordshire, then in the possession of a branch of the Jennings family, that the dining-room had been specially built for the festivities of Sarah Jennings' marriage. Probably they passed their honeymoon here.[1]

Macaulay tells the love-story of John and Sarah in the following passage:[2]

> He must have been enamoured indeed. For he had little property except the annuity which he had bought with the infamous wages bestowed on him by the Duchess of Cleveland: he was insatiable of riches: Sarah was poor; and a plain girl with a large fortune was proposed to him. His love, after a struggle, prevailed over his avarice: marriage only strengthened his passion; and, to the last hour of his life, Sarah enjoyed the pleasure and distinction of being the one human being who was able to mislead that far-sighted and sure-footed judgment, who was fervently loved by that cold heart, and who was servilely feared by that intrepid spirit.

How often men reveal their own secrets unconsciously when affronting others! This sentence, "He must have been enamoured indeed," shows the sphere to which Macaulay relegates love and the limits within which, from his personal experiences, he supposed it to be confined. It is to him a localized aberration which distorts judgment, and not a sublime passion which expresses and dominates all being. On this Paget has written finely:

[1] A writer in *Notes and Queries* (No. 151, 1926, p. 199) says, "Newsells Park, Royston, . . . had its dining-room specially built in order to give room for the festivities of the marriage of Sarah Jennings and John Churchill." The present owner of Newsells Park, Captain Sir Humphrey de Trafford, very kindly had the local parish registers examined to see if the marriage took place there, but there is no trace of it.

[2] *History*, ii, 317.

Lord Macaulay's intimate acquaintance, if not with human nature, at any rate with the writings of those who, in all ages and all languages, have most deeply stirred the heart of man, might have told him that [that] tale of young passionate love mellowing into deep and tender affection, living on linked to eternity, stronger than death and deeper than the grave, was fitly the object of feelings far different from those which it appears to waken in his breast. . . . It is a singular fact that two of the most vigorous writers of the English language appear to be in total ignorance of all the feelings which take their rise from the passion of love. We know of no single line that has fallen from the pen of Swift or from that of Lord Macaulay, which indicates any sympathy with that passion which affords in the greater number of minds the most powerful of all motives. The love of Churchill and Sarah Jennings seems to inspire Lord Macaulay with much the same feelings as those with which a certain personage, whom Dr Johnson used to call "the first Whig," regarded the happiness of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.[1]

The explanation of Macaulay's sourness is not, however, obscure. He had decided in the plan of his history that Marlborough was to be presented as the most odious figure in his cast. He was the villain who "in the bloom of youth loved lucre more than wine or women . . . and who at the height of greatness loved lucre more than power or fame." This indictment, the most detestable that can be conceived, had to be sustained. The whole story of the courtship, marriage, and lifelong union of John and Sarah was in brutal conflict with the great historian's theme. The facts could not be disputed. They proclaim the glory of that wedlock in which the vast majority of civilized mankind find happiness and salvation in a precarious world. After nearly a quarter of a century of married life Churchill, sailing for the wars from Margate quay, wrote to his wife:

> It is impossible to express with what a heavy heart I parted with you when I was at the waterside. I could have given my life to have come back, though I knew my own weakness so much I durst not, for I should have exposed myself to the company. I did for a great while have a perspective glass looking upon the cliffs in hopes I might have had one sight of you.[2]

Sarah, in a letter certainly later than 1689, and probably when he was in the Tower, wrote:

> Wherever you are whilst I have life my soul shall follow you, my ever dear Lord Marl., and wherever I am I shall only kill the time, wish for night that I may sleep, and hope the next day to hear from you.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 9.
[2] Coxe, i, 158.

wherever you are whilst I have life my
soul shall follow you my ever dear Ld Marl: &
wherever I am I shall only kill the time, wish
for night that I may sleep, & hope the next
day to hear from you.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER FROM SARAH TO MARLBOROUGH

Blenheim MSS.

Finally when, after his death, her hand was sought by the Duke of Somerset:

> If I were young and handsome as I was, instead of old and faded as I am, and you could lay the empire of the world at my feet, you should never share the heart and hand that once belonged to John, Duke of Marlborough.

These are tremendous facts, lifting the relations of men and women above the human scene with all its faults and cares. They rekindle in every generous bosom the hope that things may happen here in the life of the humblest mortals which roll round the universe and win everlasting sanction

> Above Time's troubled fountains
> On the great Atlantic mountains,
> In my golden house on high.[1]

All this vexed the mind of Lord Macaulay. It marred the design of his history. It ruptured whole sets of epigrams and antitheses which had already become his literary pets. There was nothing for it but to sneer; and sneer he did, with all the resources of his nimble, sharp, unscrupulous pen.

His literary descendant, Professor Trevelyan, whose faithful, fair, and deeply informed writings are establishing a new view of these times and the men who made them, has offered the best defence in his power for the historical malversations of his great-uncle. He says (in effect) that Macaulay, with his sense of the dramatic, vilified Marlborough's early life in order by contrast to make the glories of his great period stand out more vividly. He had completed the black background, but died before he could paint upon it "the scarlet coat and flashing eye of the victor of Blenheim." We need not reject this apologia nor the confession which it implies. But what a way to write history! On this showing—the best that can be provided—Lord Macaulay stands convicted of deliberately falsifying facts and making the most revolting accusations upon evidence which he knew, and in other connexions even admitted, was worthless, for the purpose of bringing more startling contrasts and colour into his imaginative picture and of making the crowds gape at it. Macaulay's life-work lay in the region of words, and few have been finer word-spinners. Marlborough's life is only known by his deeds. The comparison is unequal, because words are easy and many, while great deeds are difficult and rare. But there is no

[1] Blake.

treachery or misconduct of which Macaulay's malice has accused Marlborough in the field of action which is not equalled, were it true, by his own behaviour in this domain of history and letters over which he has sought to reign.

Mrs Manley, the French Ambassador Courtin, and other scurrilous writers have dwelt upon the enormous wealth which John had extracted from the Duchess of Cleveland. However, it was five years after he had married the girl he loved before he could buy her a house of his own. They shifted from one place to another according as his duties or employment led him. They followed the Duke or the drum. For five years Churchill kept on his bachelor lodgings in Germaine Street (Jermyn Street), five doors off St James's Street, and here they stayed during their rare visits to town. Meanwhile at first she lived at Mintern with Sir Winston and his wife, both now getting on in years and increasingly impoverished. Well may Sir Winston have said, "There is this poor roof—all that is left to us, in spite of our loyalty; you are ever welcome here. You have been the best of sons. But how you have thrown away your chances! Did I not, and your mother too, tell you how hard is the world, and how imprudent young people are? Still, there is always hope. Your mother and I in our young days went through eleven years of utter poverty. Had it not been for your grandmother, Eleanor Drake, we should have starved. We cared about one another, and we came through. It may well be, although I have nothing to leave, that you two will be able to keep going. It is little enough that I and your mother can do. We will do what we can, and it may be that some day you will have enough money to have a home of your own."

It must have been a very sharp descent for the glittering blade, lover of the King's mistress, daring Colonel of England and France, and friend or rival of the highest in the land, and for the much-sought-after Sarah, to come down to the prosaic, exacting necessities of family life. However, they loved each other well enough not to worry too much about external things. This was a strange beginning for the life of a man who "in the bloom of youth loved lucre more than wine or women."

It is beyond our hopes to overtake Lord Macaulay. The grandeur and sweep of his story-telling style carries him swiftly along, and with every generation he enters new fields. We can only hope that Truth will follow swiftly enough to fasten the label "Liar" to his genteel coat-tails.

Chapter Nine

MASTER AND SERVANT

1678–1679

DANBY, humouring the King and compromising himself deeply in his service, nevertheless had pursued his own policy and by 1678 he reached the culmination of his power. He had effected in 1677, to the immense disgust of Louis, the marriage between William of Orange and the Duke of York's elder daughter, Mary. This event, so potent in our history and in that of Europe, was to Danby only a feature in his anti-French policy. Since 1674 Holland, Prussia, the Empire, and Spain had all been ranged against Louis. Vast as were his resources, the weight of so many opponents began to tell. The appearance of England in the anti-French coalition seemed likely to turn the scale decisively against France. Charles continued to press peace and moderation on Louis, and marketed his remaining hesitations at the highest price. There is no doubt that, had the King now followed Danby's advice wholeheartedly, he could have brought an almost united nation, restored and revived by a breathing-spell, into war against France. He would have had much popular support and large supplies from Parliament. We came, in fact, to the very verge at the beginning of 1678.

During his three years in England Churchill had gained repute in the diplomatic work upon which, without losing his military status, he was increasingly employed. When the foreign crisis arose on the morrow of his marriage he was deemed equally apt for diplomacy or war. The alliance with Holland and the raising of the English Army to thirty thousand men opened important prospects in both spheres. On February 18, 1678, he was gazetted Colonel of one of the new regiments of foot. In March he was summoned from Mintern by the Duke of York, as the following letter to Sarah explains:

> I got to Town by a little after three, very weary. However I dressed and went to the Duke for to know what he had to command me. He told me that the reason that he sent for me was that he did believe

> that there would be occasion to send me to Holland and Flanders, and that he would have me here to be ready to go. By the French letters on Saturday, they expect to know whether we shall have peace or war; but whatever happens I believe you may be satisfied that I shall not be in danger this year.[1]

The State Papers show the character of the mission now entrusted to him. He was to act with the King's authority, and not only to settle directly with the Dutch and the Spaniards the strength of the land and sea forces to be maintained against France by the new alliance, but to arrange the military details for the co-operation of the armies and the precedence of the English and Dutch officers of the various ranks. Lastly there was the safety of four English battalions at Bruges, who were in danger through the change of policy. These were grave functions to be entrusted—upon instructions largely verbal—to a Colonel of twenty-eight. At the same time Churchill's friend, Sidney Godolphin, was sent over to manage the political side of the negotiation and to elicit from the Dutch the lowest terms on which they would conclude peace.

Churchill left England on April 5 and went first to Brussels, where he reached an agreement with the Duke of Villa Hermosa.[2] Thence he travelled *via* Breda to The Hague, and after meeting with some difficulties successfully negotiated a military convention with William of Orange, to whom he had been instructed to offer twenty thousand men "and guns proportionable." The hitch in the arrangements was mentioned both in a letter from Churchill to his wife and one from William to Danby.[3] William wrote from The Hague on April 23/May 3, 1678:

> I will not tell you anything of the way in which we have arranged matters with Mr Churchill, since he will tell you about it himself. Mr Godolphin arrived yesterday evening. I am much distressed at not being able to carry out very promptly what the King desired and was so necessary.

Lord Wolseley fell into error and confusion about this convention and letter, and tells the identical story twice in two different chapters, dating it first in May and then in August, and quoting William's same letter first in French and then in English.[4] There is

[1] Wolseley, i, 202–203.

[2] This agreement dated April 13 (O.S.) is in Add. MSS., 28397, f. 289.

[3] Churchill to his wife, April 12, 1678, Brussels: "I met with some difficulties in my business with the Prince of Orange." (Wolseley, i, 204.) The convention dated April 23 (O.S.) is at Blenheim and in Add. MSS., 28397, f. 291.

[4] *Cf.* Wolseley, i, 205, 211.

no doubt that Churchill concluded all his agreements in April, and then returned to England. When he next sailed for the Continent, in September, it was as a soldier.

He got on extremely well with William of Orange. No doubt he set himself to do so. They must have met frequently in 1677–78, not only on business, but in society.[1] They were exactly the same age. If the conversation turned on religion, they were agreed. If the aggrandizement of France became the topic, was this not the campaign in prospect? If talk ran upon the art of war, here was the profession of their lives. All the actions of the still continuing war in which they had fought, though in different theatres and on opposite sides, furnished an inexhaustible theme. Their talks may have ranged very far. We can in imagination see them poring over the map of Europe with eyes that understood so much about it. William, who was not hostile to young men, must greatly have liked to talk with his agreeable contemporary, who seemed to have the ear of every one at the English Court and had such grounding in the secrets of politics and power as was usually the privilege of princes.

The Duke of York's attitude at this time reveals the blunt, downright side of his nature, devoid of subtlety or artifice, and throws a light forward to the events of 1688. His whole outlook in religion and politics favoured an arrangement with France against Holland. But he had no patience with French domination. England must stand on her dignity and brook no patronage. An alliance having been made—rightly or not—with Holland, let the war proceed with vigour, as wars should always do. There must be no half-measures: one thing or the other.[2] We thus see him press his trusted agent Churchill into the centre of the business. Irritated by French obstructiveness at Nimwegen, James wrote to William of Orange in July that if the Dutch would do their part the King of England would sustain them. He and Monmouth—Catholic heir-presumptive and bastard Protestant claimant to the Crown—worked together with energy. On May 1 Churchill was appointed Brigadier of Foot

[1] *Cf.* S.P., 84/206, f. 151. The English envoy at The Hague reported that on April 19/29, 1678, Colonel Churchill arrived there with the Prince of Orange, and that the latter immediately spent three hours at the "Assembly of the States of Holland" deciding the question of whether it was to be peace or war.

[2] *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1678, p. 91. Danby to William of Orange: "I suppose you are before now convinced how earnest the Duke of York is for the war and how he is resolved to go over with the army himself." The conventions that Churchill concluded relating to the precedency of officers both stipulated that James should be commander-in-chief. See also James's own letters in Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, i, 208, etc.

with power to enlist recruits. He wrote from London to Sir Charles Lyttelton (June 12, 1678), "We are again very furious upon the war; so that I hope it will not be long before I have orders to come over."[1] At last, on September 3, he received orders to proceed to Flanders in company with another Brigadier, Sir John Fenwick, who was to play a significant part in his later life. Churchill's brigade consisted of "two battalions of guards and one battalion each of the Holland, the Duchess' and Lord Arlington's regiments."[2] Monmouth, with about eight thousand men drawn from the English troops in Flanders, had actually come into action in William's attack on Saint-Denis (August 4, 1678). Charles surveyed these loyal activities with cynical amusement, and pursued his negotiations with Louis. He wanted peace; he meant peace; and in the end he secured it.

Thus we see John Churchill well established in his famous dual capacity of soldier and diplomatist, entrusted in the space of a few months with delicate and weighty negotiations, and placed at the head of the first fighting troops in the Army. Already in 1678 he had the foretaste of what his great period was to bring him. Already he was by natural selection, as it seems, the chosen man, though not yet on the grand scale, for the vital situations of parley or arms. Now (September 3) he was to go to the front. However, he knew too many secrets to believe at this date in the continuance of the war, and his letters to Sarah show his accurate prosaic judgment of the tangled scene.

> You may rest satisfied that there will be certain peace in a very few days. This news I do assure you is true; therefore be not concerned when I tell you that I am ordered over and that to-morrow I go. You shall be sure by all opportunities to hear from me, for I do, if possible, love you better than I ever did. I believe it will be about the beginning of October before I shall get back, which time will appear an age to me, since in all that time I shall not be made happy with the sight of you. Pray write constantly to me. Send your letters as you did before to my house, and there I will take order how they shall be sent off to me. So, dearest soul of my life, farewell.
>
> My duty to my Father and Mother and remember me to everybody else.
>
> *Tuesday night.* My will I have here sent you for fear of accident.

This letter is endorsed in the Duchess's handwriting, "Lord

[1] *H.M.C.*, ii, 36.
[2] The various commissions are at Blenheim.

Marlborough to ease me when I might be frighted at his going into danger."

The various treaties constituting the Peace of Nimwegen were signed during the autumn of 1678. Confronted by the coalition of more than half Europe, Louis had come off with solid advantages. He had failed in his prime and fell design of destroying the Dutch Republic, but he had absorbed and annexed Franche-Comté; Lorraine was virtually in his hands, and by his perfidious failure to observe the terms of the treaties he remained in possession of a large part of Belgium, including many of the most important fortresses. Nevertheless, Nimwegen registered in his mind an unmistakable sense of being checked. He had secured valuable booty; he had widely extended the boundaries of France; but he had felt the thrust of definite and formidable resistances to his onward career. He was dissatisfied in the midst of his triumphs, and turned a baleful eye towards the quarter from which he knew he had been thwarted. In 1668 he had recoiled from Belgium to prepare the punishment of Holland. In 1678 he recoiled from Holland to prepare the punishment of Danby. This was an easier matter.

That Minister's hour of reckoning had now come. Hostile, jealous forces had been gathering against him during his four years of power. A strange loose combination of Whigs under Shaftesbury, of Dissenters, of Catholics, and of malcontents under Arlington, was fostered by Barillon into an Opposition, and fed, like Charles, with French gold. It was found that "'Church and King,' in the sense of exclusive Anglicanism and unfettered monarchy, had ceased to be possible, when a Protestant Church was governed by a King with a Catholic policy."[1]

Already before Nimwegen the sinister figure of Titus Oates had begun to present himself to the Council at Whitehall, weaving out of much fact and more falsehood the monstrous terror of the "Popish Plot." Danby tried for his own ends to exploit the plot against the Duke of York and thus turn the lightning from himself. It was too late. The Anglican champion became the victim of the "No Popery!" cry. All England was already agog with passion when Louis launched his thunderbolt against the Minister. Montagu was the tool. This Ambassador had fallen in with Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, in her Paris sojourn, had at first consoled her by becoming her lover, but had later transferred his affections to her eldest daughter. The Duchess, doubly indignant, had written

[1] Keith Feiling, *History of the Tory Party, 1640–1714*, p. 174.

revengefully to Charles. Montagu, who hurried back to London to defend himself, was dismissed summarily from his office. He forthwith offered himself willingly to the bribes of Louis.[1] For 100,000 crowns he would expose the financial skeletons of the Danby Administration to Parliament. Conducted to the bar of the House of Commons by the vindictive Shaftesbury, he produced from a carefully guarded box the proofs that Danby—the patriot, Protestant, anti-French Danby, as he had been acclaimed—had all the time been responsible for taking French subsidies. There was his name upon the receipts, and the Ambassador (who had counselled the policy) was the most competent witness to denounce it.

The natural, righteous wrath of the Commons knew no bounds. All Ministerial attempts to explain or justify were drowned in furious clamour. The King proved powerless to save his Minister. Danby was impeached, dismissed from office, and hustled to the Tower. Titus Oates about this time became the hero of the hour, and there then began that awful reign of terror and hatred which for the next five years was to scorch and sear the political life of England, was to involve both Scotland and Ireland in its frenzy, was amid the shedding of much innocent blood almost to disintegrate the society and institutions of the three kingdoms, and was, above all, to render England utterly impotent abroad. Thus was Louis XIV avenged upon Danby for his policy and upon Charles for his swindles.

When Churchill returned to England after the Treaty of Nimwegen in the winter of 1678 he found grievous changes in the atmosphere of English society. Not even the Civil Wars had given rise to such vitriolic hatreds and suspicions as had now broken loose. "No kind of thing is thought of here," wrote Robert, Earlof Sunderland, "but Mr Oates and who he has accused, and who he will accuse. . . . The whole people is enraged for fear of the King's [safety]. Everybody is in pain [alarmed for his sake] but himself."[2] As long as the prospect of war against France filled men's minds there was at least one point upon which the nation could unite. But with the disappearance of this motive the passions of parties seemed to blast and wither the whole national life. Even the faithful Cavalier Parliament was utterly estranged. Its composition had naturally changed with time. It had already, in 1673, passed the Test Act

[1] For various versions of the Montagu-Cleveland incident see Ormond Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 441–445; Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 166.

[2] Sunderland to Henry Savile, October 31, 1678. The original letter is among the Spencer MSS.

excluding Papists from all public office. It was now proceeding with the impeachment of Danby. It had lost all confidence in the King. For eighteen years this Pensionary Parliament had served him loyally; now he and they could go no farther together. Accordingly in January 1679 this second Long Parliament was dissolved. The King was never to find so friendly a one again.

The election was fought in all the fury of the Popish Plot. Shaftesbury and the Whig leaders, who had dreaded the dissolution, found themselves fortified by its results. The new House of Commons made their one object the exclusion of James or any other Popish prince from succession to the throne. Till this should be the law they refused all supply. Many were firmly persuaded that a deep design was on foot to subvert the Protestant religion, to kill the King and crown James in his stead. A pervasive propaganda was organized that the King had really married Lucy Walter in his exile, and that her son Monmouth, "our beloved Protestant Duke," was the rightful heir to the throne. The theory was inculcated with the same vigour and had almost the same vogue as the warming-pan myth of 1688. The King stood to his main principles. He solemnly proclaimed the bastardy of Monmouth: he resisted the Exclusion Bill with uncompromising grit; but he found it expedient to send James out of the kingdom even before Parliament reassembled.

In March, therefore, the Duke of York and his household went into exile first at The Hague and then in Brussels, taking up their abode in the same house in which Charles had lived before the Restoration. Churchill, therefore, had scarcely returned to England when he had to set out again, this time upon a melancholy pilgrimage. Sarah too was fetched from Mintern with her small belongings, and joined the forlorn party. By April James was reluctantly making plans to settle in Brussels: "I fear," he told Legge,

> for the longer people are used to be without me, the harder it will [be] in my mind [as I see it] to come back, and though I do not doubt of the continuance of his Majesty's kindness to me, yet you know there are those about him who would be glad to keep me from coming back to him. . . . In the mean time it is very uneasy for me to be without coach and horses here.

A few months later he proposed to have his fox-hounds and huntsman sent over, as "I now begin to have plenty of stag-hunting and the country looks as if the fox-hunting would be very good."[1] In

[1] For these letters see Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, 34 *seq.*

August Princess Anne came over to join her father. Gradually a shadow Court grew up in Brussels, of which Lady Peterborough, Lady Bellasis, and the Churchills were the mainstays. To these we must add the beautiful Frances Jennings. The reader of Grammont will remember her haughty constancy in all the temptations of Charles's Court: how she had rebuffed the Duke of York: how even the seductive monarch himself had not attained the goal: how she had been courted in vain by "Mad Dick Talbot" and had eventually married Lord Hamilton. But Lord Hamilton had fallen in battle at Ziebernstern, and Frances had now been for nearly three years a widow, fair to see. The two sisters were very happy to come together again for a space. Meanwhile the exiles were tormented by the news from home. The growth of Monmouth's popularity with the people, the violence of the Whig faction, the progress of the Exclusion Bill, filled them with dismay. Churchill was sent hot-foot on unpromising errands, now to Charles in England, now to Louis in Paris, in the interests of his unhappy master. He knew everybody and how to approach them. He was well received everywhere—as a Protestant by the Whigs, as James's agent by the Catholics—and could plead or whisper into the ear of power. He used every resource.

In August the King fell ill. Deep alarm was felt by those who saw his symptoms and knew how his excesses had worn him out. Churchill was in England at the time. Sunderland, Halifax, Godolphin, Feversham, and La Kéroualle, buzzing together, all felt that James should be sent for. A demise of the Crown in James's absence meant certainly a Whig attempt to set Monmouth on the throne, and Churchill was sent to fetch James over. He came at once most obviously disguised. We have a spirited account by Lord Longford of his journey:

LONDON
Sept. 6, 1679

*TO LORD ARRAN

In my last I gave your Lordship an account of the surprizal we all had at the Duke's arrival on Monday night. He left Brussels in a disguise of a black perruque only and a plain stuff suit without his Star and Garter, rode post to Calais with my Lord Peterborough, Colonel Churchill, Mr Doyley and two footmen but not in their livery. He then took ship and it was so bad a sail that though he had no ill wind he was nineteen hours at sea before he landed at Dover. He went immediately to the post house where Churchill like a French officer in his scarf represented the best man in the company and being

known to the post master, he [the postmaster] welcomed him, took him by the hand, said he was glad to see him, but swore by God he should be much gladder to see a better man than he and at an instant looked full in the Duke's face, when he knew it would not seem [be seemly] to take notice of him, because he saw him in disguise. Churchill was mounting upon the best horse and just as the Duke was mounting, another man who belonged to the post office went to the other side of the Duke, looked full in his face, and whispered so softly to himself that nobody could have heard him but the Duke took no notice, but rode on. These were the only persons that knew him upon the road. And yet they kept his secret. My Lord Peterborough and Doyley were outridden so that only His Highness and Churchill with one footman arrived on Monday in the evening at seven of the clock at the Barbican in Smithfield where they took a hackney coach and drove to the law office in Lombard Street, where Churchill alighted and went to see if Phil Froude was at home, but he being abroad, Churchill left a letter for him to follow him to Sir Allen Apsley's when he came home, not acquainting him that the Duke was come. At Sir Allen's the Duke supped and went to bed there, and at three in the morning took coach for Windsor, his arrival being kept secret till he was gone thither, where he arrived about seven, and came into the King's withdrawing room at the moment my Lord Sussex, who was then in waiting in the bedchamber, opened the door; at which the Duke entered and when he came to the King's bedside he with great submission threw himself upon his knees, asking the King's pardon for his coming into England and into his presence without his leave, saying he was so confounded at the news of His Majesty's illness that he could have no satisfaction or content in his mind till he had seen His Majesty. And since that now he had that happiness to find him past all danger (for which he blessed God) he was ready to return again that morning if it was His Majesty's pleasure; for he came with resolutions to be absolutely governed and disposed of by His Majesty in all things. Upon this His Majesty cast his arms about him, kissed him and received him with all kindness imaginable and 'tis said by the standers-by that they both shed tears of joy at the interview.[1]

The temper of the nation was such that Charles durst not keep his brother at his side. He destroyed the first Exclusion Bill by dissolving the Parliament which brought it forward; but the election produced a House of Commons of the old hue and even sharper resolve. A new Exclusion Bill rolled through its stages, and all money was refused the Crown. The fury of the times had even destroyed the loyalty of the King's own circle; Ministers, courtiers, and favourites

[1] Carte MSS., 232, f. 51.

—mistresses, indeed—sided with the Opposition. Louise de Kéroualle, now Duchess of Portsmouth, used the most persuasive arguments of all. She had become attached to Charles, and, careless of French interests, advised him for his own good. Why should he ruin himself for this hated, unreasonable brother? Her antagonism to James became henceforward a definite factor in the broil. Godolphin, pliable and moderate, held his office, but voted for exclusion. The King's situation was poignant. He loved his brother dearly, and in no part of his life did he show such wisdom and courage. He kept rigidly within the letter of the Constitution, but he used all the resources of law and of time with patient adroitness. He now bowed to the storm and sent James back to Brussels.

Churchill had no sooner announced his arrival with the Duke in England to his wife at Brussels than he was dispatched upon a mission to Paris. The object was to further James's design of knitting up again the arrangement with France and the renewal of subsidies which would render Charles less dependent upon Parliament and James less in jeopardy of exclusion. In the letter which Churchill bore from James he is described as "Master of my Wardrobe to whom you may give entire credit." The King approved, and Churchill's expenses (£300) were paid from the royal exchequer. Churchill was instructed to promise on behalf of James that he would in future identify himself completely with the interests of the French King, and to apologize for his master's conduct in the last two years when he had been so active in aid of William of Orange and had even permitted this arch-enemy of France to marry his own daughter Mary. The negotiation was abortive. Louis XIV refused to offer an adequate sum.[1] He saw better uses for his money in England. It was October before Churchill returned to Brussels.

But James's patience was already at an end. He refused to stay any longer in Belgium. He forthwith dispatched Churchill in advance of him to England "to get leave [for him] to go to London and thence by land to Scotland."[2] This was granted. At the same time, to reassure James, the King sent Monmouth out of the kingdom too. The health of the monarch was henceforth to be watched from abroad by three pairs of interested, vigilant eyes: by James

[1] Louis XIV to Barillon, September 21 (N.S.), 1679, from Fontainebleau by special messenger, *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 137, ff. 87–89. This letter gives the most detailed account of Churchill's mission. Other notes from the French archives are printed in Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, i, 321 *seq.* For Churchill's expenses see *C.S.P.* (*Treasury Books*), 1679–80, pp. 116, 233, 240.

[2] James to Legge, October 14, 1679; Foljambe Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 139.

from Edinburgh, and by Monmouth and William of Orange from The Hague. The far-seeing William elaborated his courtesies to both his rivals, and was eminently correct in his demeanour to Charles.

Accordingly, in October, James, having kissed his daughter Mary at The Hague—as it fell out, for the last time—travelled through London by land for Edinburgh. The journey was made as if it were a progress; and the large towns and great houses all along the road offered dutiful hospitality. It was thirty-eight days before he reached Edinburgh, and set up his Court there with suitable celebrations. Churchill was ever at his side; but Sarah, who was expecting a baby, had to stay behind in his lodgings in Jermyn Street. Here the beautiful Frances joined her, and the two sisters kept house together. The baby, "Harriot," was born at the end of October, and died in infancy. The young couple had had a much disturbed year and a half of married life, with no home or resting-place of any kind. They were now widely separated. Scotland was as far off in those days as Canada is now, and the journey by land or sea was incomparably toilsome and dangerous. Such are the vicissitudes which poverty imposes.

Chapter Ten

THE UNSEEN RIFT

1679–1682

THIS chapter is gloomy for our tale. While the French power grew and overhung Europe, the political and religious storms which raged in England from 1679 to 1683 concentrated their fury upon the Duke of York. His change of religion seemed to be the origin of the evils that had fallen upon the realm. There was impatience with individual conscientious processes which disturbed the lives of millions of people. That one man should have it in his power, even from the most respectable of motives, to involve so many others in distress and throw the whole nation into disorder, weighed heavily on the minds of responsible people. Even the most faithful servants of the King, the most convinced exponents of Divine Right, looked upon James with resentment. They saw in him the prime cause of the dangers and difficulties which his loving royal brother had to bear. There he was, a public nuisance, the Papist heir whose bigotry and obstinacy were shaking the throne. His isolation became marked; the circle about him narrowed severely. Forced into exile in Belgium and now to be marooned in Scotland, his lot was cast in dismal years. With all the strength and obstinacy of his nature he retorted scorn and anger upon his innumerable foes—the subjects he hoped to rule. The ordeal left a definite and ineffaceable imprint upon his character. He felt some of the glories of martyrdom. Henceforward he would dare all and inflict all for the faith that was in him.

It was in the household of this threatened, harassed, and indignant Prince that the first four or five years of the married life of John and Sarah were to lie. The wars had stopped, and with them for John not only pay and promotion, but all chance to use that military gift of which he had become conscious. He must follow a master, united to him by many ties, but a man unlovable, from whom his whole outlook and nature diverged—nay, if the truth be told, recoiled; a master who was at times an outcast, and whose public

odium his personal servants to some extent shared. Between him and that master opened the almost unbridgeable gulf which separated Protestant and Catholic. Faithful and skilful were the services which Churchill rendered to James. Many a secret or delicate negotiation with the French King or with Charles II and the Court or with English political parties was entrusted to the discreet and persuasive henchman. The invaluable character of these services and the sense of having been his patron from boyhood onwards were the bonds which held James to him. But no services, however zealous and successful, could fill the hiatus between contrary religions. The English Catholics, and above all James, their fanatical champion, and his immediate friends, were united not only by their creed, but by the comradeship which springs from being persecuted for conscience' sake. They thought thoughts and spoke a language of their own. Relations they must have with Protestants. Indeed, the Churchills formed for them indispensable contacts with the outer world. The fact that these two well-known Protestants were high in James's confidence could be paraded as a proof of the toleration of the heir to the throne. But at this time, when religion held the first place in men's minds, and when Catholics were a sect hunted and proscribed, there could be no perfect union of hearts. "They are with us," James might have exclaimed to his close, fervent necklace of priests and co-religionists, "with us, and serviceable; but, alas, not of us." And so it continued to the end.

However, the joys and responsibilities of the early years of married life redeemed for John and Sarah their harsh, anxious, and disturbed surroundings. They had in their family life an inner circle of their own, against which the difficulties of the Duke's household and the nation-wide hostility with which that household was regarded might beat in vain. We must record their trapesings to and fro as the fortunes of their master ebbed and flowed.

There are a few letters from John on the northern road or in Scotland to Sarah in Jermyn Street.[1]

> *You may guess by yourself how uneasy I have been since I left you, for nothing breathing ever loved another so well as I do you, and I do swear to you as long as I live I will never love another; and if you do ever love me, I will always love you. I have spoke to Mr Frowde so that you have but to send your letters to him, and he will always send them safe to me. After I saw you my Lady Sunderland

[1] Those letters marked with an asterisk have not been previously published. The others are in Wolseley, chapter xxix.

spoke to me herself, and told me that she took it very unkindly that I had not left you in her care, but however she said she would take care of you in spite of me. Therefore pray when you see her be very civil to her, for as things now stand it is very fit you should be well with her. Mr Legge leaves us this night so that then I will write to you again; till when, my soul's soul, farewell.

STILTON
Monday night [*November* 1, 1679?]

*You will see by this that I am got safe to this place, and to-morrow night I intend to lie at Doncaster. I am a great deal wearier in riding this day than I ever was when I have ridden twice as far; if I continue so to-morrow, I shall hardly get to Scotland on Saturday, but sooner I promise you I will not, for all that I pretend to, is to be at Berwick on Friday night. You will be sure to hear from me as soon as I get to my journey's end, and pray believe that I love nobody in the world but yourself, and I do assure you I do at this present with all my heart wish we were together. Therefore pray be ready to come away as soon as you may, for if I should not come back, I would beg hard you would come away the day after you know it, and I do assure you, you shall be extreme welcome to me.

Pray kiss the child once for me.

EDINBURGH
Jan. 15, 1680

I have received yours of the 10th with a copy of the letter you writ to my Mother, which if she takes anything ill that is in that letter, you must attribute it to the peevishness of old age, for really there is nothing in it that she ought to take ill. I take it very kindly that you have writ to her again, for she is my Mother, and I hope at last that she will be sensible that she is to blame in being peevish. I long extremely to have this month over so that I may be leaving this country, which is very uneasy since you were not in it, for I do assure you that my thoughts are so fond of you that I cannot be happy when I am from you, for I love you so well that you cannot yourself wish to be loved better.

He adds this message for Frances:

Pray present my services to the widow and tell her that I am very glad she is not married, and if she stays for my consent she never will be.

Frances did not take his advice, and "mad Dick Talbot," afterwards Earl of Tyrconnel and James's viceroy in Ireland, renewed the suit he had pressed so ardently six years before. This time he

was successful. Thus the delectable Frances was caught up in the Catholic-Jacobite world, and after 1688 consumed her life in exile.

January 17th, 1680

I do with all my soul wish myself with you; and now that I am from you I do assure you that I have no satisfaction but that of receiving yours and writing to you, and flattering myself that it will not now be long before I shall be truly happy in being with you again. You are so well beloved by me that if that will make you happy, you ought to be the happiest woman living, for none is so well beloved as you are by me. I hope by the first post of next month to send you word what day I shall leave this country, which is very much desired by me—not for any dislike to the country, but from the great desire I have to be with you, for you are dearer to me than ever you were in your life.

He adds quaintly, "My sarvice to Hariote," who was at that time about ten weeks old.

And a few days later:

Although I believe you love me, yet you do not love so well as I, so that you cannot be truly sensible how much I desire to be with you. I swear to you the first night in which I was blessed in having you in my arms was not more earnestly wished for by me than now I do to be again with you, for if ever man loved woman truly well, I now do you, for I swear to you were we not married I would beg you on my knees to be my wife, which I could not do did I not esteem you as well as I love you.

If you please my service to your sister.

His earnest wish was to return from Scotland to England to see his wife and baby.

EDINBURGH
Jan. 29, 1680

*[I have received] yours of the 22nd, and also this to-day of the 24th, both doubting that I will leave this place the beginning of next month as I promised you, but before now I do not doubt but that you are satisfied I shall, for in my last I wrote to you to write no more. . . . London and Edinburgh are [not the?] same, for you [one] may find pleasure in being abroad at London, but it is not the same here, so that I will never send you that excuse for my not writing. About an hour after I had written to you last post night, I was taken ill of my old fits, and last night I had another of them so that for this two days I have had very violent headachings as ever I had in my life; I have this day taken physic so that I think I am better but . . . [torn] which makes me melancholy, for I love you so well that I cannot think

with patience of dying, for then we must part for ever, which is a dreadful thing to me that loves you above all expression. The doctor is come in and will let me write no more, for he says it is the worst thing I can do. So, my All, farewell.

John's hopes of coming south were not ill-founded, for on the very day this last letter was written Charles sent a welcome command to his brother to return. James lost no time in taking leave of his Scottish Government, and at the end of February transported himself and his household in the royal yachts from Leith to Deptford.

Churchill on the eve of the voyage begged his wife to

pray for fair winds, so that we may not stay here, nor be long at sea, for should we be long at sea, and very sick, I am afraid it would do me great hurt, for really I am not well, for in my whole lifetime I never had so long a fit of headaching as now: I hope all the red spots of the child will be gone against I see her, and her nose straight, so that I may fancy it be like the Mother, for as she has your coloured hair, so I would have her be like you in all things else.

The family were united in Jermyn Street in the beginning of March, and John saw his child for the first time. We do not know how long the infant lived. It may well be that the sorrow of her death came upon them almost as soon as they were together again.

James spent the summer of 1680 in England, and hoped, with the King, that the new Parliament summoned for October might be more tolerant to him. It is plain that in this interval Churchill was most anxious to secure some employment which would give him and his family a secure habitation. The command of one of the permanent regiments like the Admiralty Regiment, the governorship of Sheerness, or a foreign embassy were posts to which he might reasonably aspire. James was pleased with his services and made every effort to promote his interests, subject to one fatal condition. "So long as I am from him [Charles II]," he wrote to Hyde in December 1680,[1] "I would not willingly have Churchill from me." When James's hopes were high he tried to find an appointment for his servant, and when they fell he could not spare him.

Thus in the summer of 1680 James favoured Churchill's fitness to be Ambassador either to France or to Holland. In the latter case he was warmly seconded by William. Barillon's account of May 20, 1680, may serve.

[1] Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, i, 51.

> Mr Sidney [the English Minister at The Hague] will come home soon. It is believed he will not return and I am told that Mr Churchill [*le sieur Chercheil*] may well succeed him. If this is done, it will be to satisfy the Duke of York and to reassure him on all possible negotiations with the Prince of Orange. He [James] distrusts Mr Sidney, and has hated him for a long time. Mr Churchill on the contrary has the entire confidence of his master, as your Majesty could see when he had the honour of presenting himself to you last year. He is not a man who has any experience of affairs. It is also said that the Prince of Orange has declared that there should be no other Ambassador of England in Holland but him, and that it is only necessary to send docile personages who let themselves be led.[1]

The talk about the Paris embassy gave offence to its occupant, Henry Savile, who wrote in protest to his brother, Lord Halifax:

> I am told that Mr Churchill likes my station so well that he has a mind to it, and got his master to work for him, and by very cunning artifice endeavours to make my friends willing to have me recalled upon pretext I live too high and shall ruin myself.

Halifax, who had already formed a firm and lasting friendship with John, wrote back at once saying, "Churchill, whatever inclination he may have to be minister, will never give such a price for it as the supplanting of a friend." Savile, reassured, explained to Halifax that he had now found out that the report had arisen from a remark of the Duke of York "which was improved into a story round the town."[2]

But all these hopes and projects, real or shadowy, came to naught. The new Parliament was fiercer than its predecessor. Shaftesbury was at the head of a flaming Opposition. A fresh Exclusion Bill advanced by leaps and bounds. The ferocity of the Whigs knew no limit, and their turpitude lay not far behind. Their cause was the cause of England, and is the dominant theme of this tale. Their conduct was sullied by corruption and double-dealing unusual even in that age. Their leaders without exception all took for either personal or party purposes French gold, while they shouted against Papist intrigues and denounced all arrangements with France. Upon this squalid scene Louis XIV gloated with cynical eyes. His agent Barillon, presiding over the dizzy whirlpools of Westminster and Whitehall, bribed both sides judiciously to maintain the faction fight. Many illustrious names, Whig and Tory, figure impartially

[1] Barillon to Louis XIV, May 20, 1680, P.R.O. Transcripts.
[2] *Savile Correspondence* (Camden Society), pp. 124, 128–129.

on his pay-rolls. Lady Harvey joined her brother Montagu, the treacherous ex-Ambassador, upon them. Lord Holles, Hampden, the son of a famous father, and the Duke of Buckingham pocketed each a thousand guineas. Algernon Sidney, soon to give his life, took a solatium of five hundred guineas. The mood was that, if the King and his Ministers and courtiers could get gold out of France for their Popish leanings, why should not the honest Protestant Opposition have their share of the mischief-money too? Thus Louis stoked the fires which burned away the English strength.

One name is conspicuous in its absence from these lists of shame —Churchill's. Yet how glad Barillon would have been to have slipped a thousand guineas into the palm of this needy Colonel and struggling family man! The artful Ambassador, as we see by his correspondence, was no friend to John. Any tittle of spiteful gossip or depreciatory opinion which he could gather he sedulously reported. Churchill, this influential, ubiquitous go-between, the Protestant agent of the Duke of York, was well worth tainting, even if he could not be squared. Sarah long afterwards wrote, "The Duke of Marlborough never took a bribe." Think how these lists have been scanned by the eyes of Marlborough's detractors. See how every scrap of fouling evidence has been paraded and exploited. Yet nothing has been found to challenge Sarah's assertion.

The approaching assembly of this hostile Parliament was sufficient to force the King again to expatriate the brother of whom he was so fond. The Duke, desperate, asked Churchill to fetch Barillon to him, and begged the Ambassador to procure from Louis the funds which would obviate recourse to the dreaded House of Commons. James was obstinately determined not to be banished from London a third time. It took the combined efforts of the King and the two Secretaries of State, Sunderland and Jenkins, aided by Halifax and Essex, to persuade him.[1] The pressures were extreme. On October 20 James and his household most reluctantly again set out by sea for Edinburgh. This time both the Churchills could go together. They endured a rough voyage of five days. James was received in Scotland with due ceremony; but the famous cannon known as 'Mons Meg' burst in firing its salute, and many were the superstitious head-waggings which followed the occurrence. This time James seriously undertook the government of Scotland, and set his seal upon a melancholy epoch.

Scotland was at once the origin and the end of the Stuarts. No

[1] Dalrymple, i, Part I, 344 *seq.*

feature of Charles II's reign is more lamentable than the government of his northern kingdom. The Duke of Lauderdale, the ablest, the most wicked, and the sole survivor in office of the Cabal, was its mainspring for nearly twenty years. He had married Lady Dysart, a woman of appalling greed, whom Burnet describes as "ravenously covetous" and as one "who would have stuck at nothing by which she might compass her ends."[1] He was himself a former Covenanter, probably a freethinker, and exploited and applied all the local feuds and fanaticisms with callous craft. Nationalism at this time in Scotland stood not upon a political basis, as in England, but upon the Kirk. The Reformation in Scotland had meant a period of violent mob-law and a revolutionary break with the past. Cold, sour, unchanging hatreds divided the Scottish race. Lauderdale used the quarrel between the Lowlands and the Highlands and the religious rifts to make a balance by which the King's authority could stand. Cromwell had given Scotland Parliamentary union with England. A freer trade had flourished across the Border, and domestic peace reigned upon the overthrow of Presbyterian dominance. Under King Charles the Parliamentary union was dissolved, and hostile tariffs froze the streams of trade and wealth. Lauderdale held the country down. He extracted good revenues for the Crown, maintained a trustworthy standing army, and broke up by ruthless methods the fervent resistance of the Covenanters. Archbishop Sharp was brutally murdered in revenge on Magus Muir. A fierce rebellion in 1679 had been skilfully and temperately suppressed by Monmouth. Terror and counter-terror grew together.

It was over this scene that James now began actively to preside. On his first visit to Scotland his rule had seemed a mitigation of the severities of Lauderdale.[2] "I live there," he wrote, "as cautiously as I can, and am very careful to give offence to none." But now, between 1680 and 1682, embittered by ill-usage, emboldened by anger, his thoroughgoing temperament led him to support the strongest assertions of authority. When, in June 1681, Churchill brought him from London his patent as Royal Commissioner he decided to make use of the Scottish Parliament to obtain an emphatic and untrammelled assertion of his right of succession. He summoned the first Parliament held in Scotland since 1673. He set himself to demonstrate here on a minor scale the policy which he thought his brother should follow in England. He passed through

[1] *History of My Own Time*, i, 437.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii, 292–293.

the Parliament of 1681 an anti-Exclusion Bill. He developed with care the anti-national Scottish army. He used the wild Highlanders, the only Catholics available, to suppress the contumacy of the Lowlanders. The torture of the boot was inflicted freely upon Covenanters and persons of obstinate religious opinions. On these occasions most of the high personages upon the Privy Council would make some excuse to leave the room. But accusing pens allege that the Duke of York was always at his post. Dark and hateful days for Scotland!

Churchill's closest friend in James's circle at this time was George Legge. He was a faithful man with a fine record as a sea-captain in all the wars with the Dutch. He had long been in the Duke of York's service as Groom, and later Gentleman of his Bedchamber and his Master of the Horse. He had been Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth for some years, and in January 1681 was appointed Master-General of the Ordnance. The Duke, whose relations with him were almost those of father and son, tried his best to secure him the enjoyment of both offices. In the end Legge was obliged to "part with Portsmouth." He was related to Churchill on his mother's side by that same strain of Villiers blood of which mention has been made. He ranked far higher in favour than Churchill, who must have greatly desired the comfortable office of the Ordnance. However, John wrote him a handsome and characteristic letter upon his appointment:

> I see by yours to the Duke that came this day that you are now Master of the Ordnance. I do not doubt but you are satisfied that I am glad of it, and I do assure you that I wish that you may live long to enjoy it, and as I wish you as well as any friend you have, so I will take the liberty to tell you that you will not be just to your family if you do not now order your affairs so as that you may by living within yourself be able in time to clear your estates. I will say no more on this subject at present but when we meet you must expect me to be troublesome if I find you prefer your own living before your children's good.[1]

He signs himself "your affectionate kinsman and faithful friend and servant." We shall follow Legge's tragic fortunes as Lord Dartmouth later.

Churchill, apart from his aversion from cruelties of all kinds, was now placed in a most difficult and delicate position. James relied on him to make every effort to secure his return to Court, and to

[1] January 5, 1681 Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, Appendix V, 55–56.

support his claims against Monmouth and the Exclusionists; while, on the other hand, Churchill's powerful friends in London, Sunderland, Halifax, Godolphin, and Hyde, told him to keep James in Scotland at all costs. On December 22, 1680, Sunderland wrote to him, "I must join with [Hyde] in desiring you to help in persuading the Duke that whatever appears ungrateful to him in these letters is intended the kindlyest by the King."[1] Yet a month later (January 22, 1681) Churchill arrived in London on a confidential mission from James to press the King not to allow Parliament to sit, and to enter into an alliance with France and thus obtain his return.[2] Amid these conflicting currents no man was more capable of steering a shrewd and sensible course. He carried out his instructions from James with proper diligence and discretion; but, on the other hand, his cautious temper prevented the wilder threats of his master (about raising the Scots or the Irish in his own defence) from being "attended with consequences"; for he "frankly owned" to the French Ambassador that James "was not in a condition to maintain himself in Scotland, if the King his brother did not support him there."[3]

In Scotland James's only possible opponent was the somewhat lackadaisical ninth Earl of Argyll.[4] "The Duke of York," wrote Burnet, "seeing how great a man the Earl of Argyll was, concluded it was necessary either to gain him or to ruin him." He first tried vainly to convert him by asking him to "exchange the worst of religions for the best." When Parliament met, Argyll opposed a clause in the Scottish Test Act exempting members of the royal household from the Protestant Oath of Allegiance. This angered James, and immediately on the adjournment of Parliament schemes hostile to the Earl were revived in a new form. It was proposed to apply to the King for the appointment of a commission to review his rights, deprive him of his heritable offices, and impose upon his property the debts which had been alleged against it. Argyll left Edinburgh to obtain the documents which confirmed him in his offices, and on his return interviewed James after supper in his bedroom at Holyrood to protest against his dismissal from one of his posts in his absence. If, Argyll said, this were "to express a frown, it is the first I have had from His Majesty these thirty years. I know

[1] Sunderland to Churchill, Blenheim MSS.
[2] Clarke, *James II*, pp. 659–660.
[3] Dalrymple, i, Part I, 344.
[4] The following account is based mainly upon J. Willcock's *Life of Argyll* (1907).

I have enemies, but they shall never make me alter my duty and resolution to serve His Majesty. . . ."

The Churchills were in no sort of agreement with their patron in his Scottish courses, and it is clear that they regarded both the policy and its author with increasing repugnance. The old Duchess nearly three generations later in her comments on Lediard's history writes:

> *All the account that is given in this History of the Duke's arbitrary Proceedings in Scotland was true; for I saw it myself, and was much grieved at the Trials of several People that were hang'd for no Reason in the World, but because they would not disown what they had said, that King Charles the Second had broke his Covenant. I have cried at some of these Trials, to see the Cruelty that was done to these Men only for their choosing to die rather than tell a Lye. How happy would this Country be if we had more of those Sort of Men! I remember the Duke of Marlborough was mightily grieved one Day at a Conversation he had heard between the Earl of Argyle (who was beheaded afterwards for explaining the Test in saying he took it in such a Sense as was agreeable to his duty to God and the King) and the Duke of York. The Duke of Marlborough told me he never heard a man speak more Reason than he did to the Duke [of York] and after he had said what he at first resolved, the Duke would never make Answer to any Thing, But You shall excuse me, my Lord, You shall excuse me My Lord; And so continued for a long Time whatever he said without answering otherwise. Another thing I remember the Duke of Marlborough told me when we were in Scotland, there came a Letter from Lewis the Grand to the Duke of York, writ by himself; which put all the Family into a great Disorder; For no body could read it. But it was enough to shew there was a strict [secret] Correspondence between the Duke and the King of France. All these things the Duke of Marlborough told me with great Grief; But it was not at all in his Power to help any of them.[1]

We may make all allowances for the bias of this statement, but it certainly reveals the breach which had opened. The Duchess was eighty, but an old person's memory generally recalls faithfully the impressions of youth, while it often fails to record the events of later life.

In August 1681 the Duke of York's affairs in England were going from bad to worse, and the King was in desperate grapple with his brother's pursuers. An intense effort was concerted to persuade James to conform at least in outward semblance to the religion of

[1] Letter of October 6, 1744, in Spencer MSS.

his future subjects. His appeals to be recalled to England were made use of against him. The King offered to allow him to return if he would but come to church. After all, had he not consented to be present during the prayers of the Scottish Parliament? Surely what all his well-wishers now asked was but an extension of that wise concession to political exigencies of the first order. Halifax, strong in the prestige of having destroyed the first Exclusion Bill, used hard words. Unless, he declared, the Duke complied, "his friends would be obliged to leave him like a garrison one could no longer defend." Every one could see what a simplification his assent would make; and what a boon to all! His first wife's brother, Laurence Hyde, afterwards Earl of Rochester, was entrusted with the difficult task of his conversion to conformity, upon which the strongest family, social, and State pressures were engaged. Hyde, Churchill, and Legge were James's three most intimate personal servants. They had been with him for many years. His partiality for them had long been proved. Legge was absent, but we cannot doubt that Churchill supported Hyde with any influence he could command. Nothing availed. James was advised by his confessor that there could be no paltering with heresy. Such advice was decisive.

This incident deserves prominence because it evoked from Churchill one of those very rare disclosures of his political-religious convictions in this period which survive. He wrote to Legge the following letter:

> *Sept.* 12, 1681, *Berwick*
>
> DEAR COUSIN,
>
> I should make you both excuses and compliments for the trouble you have been at in sending my wife to me, but I hope it is not that time of day between you and I, for without compliment as long as I live I will be your friend and servant. My Lord Hyde, who is the best man living, will give you an account of all that has passed. You will find that nothing is done in what was so much desired, *so that sooner or later we must be all undone.*[1] As soon as Lewen has his papers the Duke would have [wish to] take the first opportunity by sea and come from Scotland. My heart is very full, so that should I write to you of the sad prospect I fear we have, I should tire your patience; therefore I refer myself wholly to my Lord Hyde and assure you that wherever I am, you and my Lord Hyde have a faithful servant of [in] me.[2]

This letter, written so secretly to his intimate friend and kinsman seven years before the revolution of 1688, must not be forgotten in the unfolding of our story.

[1] Author's italics. [2] Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, Appendix V, 67–68.

On December 12, 1681, Argyll was brought to trial for treason for explaining that he took the Oath of Allegiance "as far as it was consistent with the Protestant religion," and "not repugnant to it or his loyalty." By the exertions of James he was condemned to death. On the eve of his execution he escaped by a romantic artifice and for a time lay hidden in London. When the news of his refuge was brought to the King by officious spies, the tolerant Charles brushed them away with the remark, "Pooh, pooh, a hunted partridge!" His brother had a different outlook.

Churchill had deplored Argyll's sentence. He wrote to Sir John Werden, the Duke of York's secretary, and told him he hoped on account of their old friendship that Argyll would receive no punishment; and he wrote to George Legge that he trusted Argyll's escape from prison would be looked on as a thing of no great consequence.[1]

The author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* relates that when in Scotland Churchill had "preserved from ruin and destruction several poor people whose scruples of conscience rendered them obnoxious to the laws then in force." We have therefore not only Sarah's octogenarian recollections, but Churchill's conversation with Barillon, the reliance that Sunderland put on him to moderate James, and Churchill's clear dislike of the treatment of Argyll. All these are trustworthy proofs of the growth of honest, grievous differences in political temper and outlook between James and his trusted servant.

The leaders of Scottish society were not men of half-measures. Affronted to the core by the ill-usage of their country as it continued year after year, they devoted their lives to practical schemes of vengeance, and they turned resolutely to the Prince of Orange. The flower of the Scottish nobility emigrated to Holland with deep, bitter intent to return sword in hand. All became unrelenting enemies of the House of Stuart. In the revolution of 1688 Lowland Scotland swung to William as one man.

In 1682 Churchill was able to render a service to his patron of which James was profoundly sensible. The Duchess of Portsmouth was anxious about her future financial position. She sought £5000

[1] Churchill's letter to Werden does not survive, but the reply (Blenheim MSS.) proves its tenour. He wrote on December 22, 1681, to Churchill, "Your's of the 13th is ye freshest yt I have had from you; & by others service [?] I find ye Issue to the Ea. of Argille's Tryall such as was expected; & now (in regard to Yr old ffriendship, which you put me in Mind of) I hope he will have the Kings Pardon, & ye Effects of His Bounty, & hereafter in some Measure deserve both." See also Churchill to Legge, January 5, 1682, Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, pp. 55-56 (wrongly dated 1681).

a year secured upon the almost unimpeachable revenues of the Post Office. She pressed Charles hard upon the point. But all the revenues of the Post Office had been granted to the Duke of York for life, and the Duke was then still an impatient exile in Scotland. Churchill spent as much time and trouble upon the bargain that James should cede to "Madame Carwell" her £5000 from the Post Office, in exchange for his being allowed to return home, as in later years upon the combinations of the Grand Alliance or the strategy of the world war. In the first instance James was allowed to come to London to take part in the negotiations. Although these fell through because an Act of Parliament was required to alienate the Post Office revenues, fraternal contacts were re-established. At this time, as the next chapter will explain, the King felt his power returning to him. He was, moreover, anxious to gratify Louis XIV by restoring his Papist brother to his place at Court. The long-sought permission was granted. James, with a considerable retinue of nobles and servants, embarked in the frigate *Gloucester* on May 4, 1682, to wind up his affairs in Scotland and bring his household home.

The catastrophe which followed very nearly brought this and many important tales to an end. But another revealing beam of light is thrown by it upon Churchill's attitude towards his master. The royal vessel was accompanied by a small squadron and several yachts, on one of which was Samuel Pepys himself. Two days out the *Gloucester* grounded in the night upon a dangerous sandbank three miles off Cromer, on the Norfolk coast, known as the 'Lemon and Ore.'[1] After about an hour she slipped off the bank and foundered almost immediately in deep water. Although the sea was calm and several ships lay in close company, scarcely forty were saved out of the three hundred souls on board.

Numerous detailed and incompatible accounts of this disaster from its survivors and spectators have been given. Some extol the Duke of York's composure, his seamanship, his resolute efforts to save the vessel, and the discipline and devotion of the sailors, who, though about to drown, cheered as they watched him row away. Others dwell on the needless and fatal delays in abandoning the ship, on the confusion which prevailed, on the ugly rushes made for the only available boat, and finally portray James going off with his priests, his dogs, and a handful of close personal friends in the long-boat, which "might well have held fifty," leaving the rest to perish

[1] In many histories these two shoals—the Lemon and Ower—are described as lying "off the Humber." They are actually thirty miles to the south of it.

miserably. Catholic and Tory writers, naturally enough, incline to the former version, and Protestants and Whigs to the latter. We have no concern with the merits of the controversy. What is important is Churchill's view of it. He, like Legge, was one of the favoured few invited into the boat by James, and to that he owed his life. One would therefore have expected that he would instinctively have taken the side of his master and, in a sense, rescuer, and would have judged his actions by the most lenient standards. Instead, he appears to have been the sternest critic. Sixty years later Sarah, in her illuminating comments on Lediard's history, writes as follows:

> ★Since my last account of Mr Lediard's Book, I have read the account of the shipwreck of the *Gloucester* (page 40). The Truth of which I had as soon as the Duke [of Marlborough] came to Scotland from his own Mouth: (for I was there) who blamed the Duke [of York] to me excessively for his Obstinacy and Cruelty. For if he would have been persuaded to go off himself at first, when it was certain the Ship could not be saved, the Duke of Marlborough was of the Opinion that there would not have been a Man lost. For tho' there was not Boats enough to carry them all away, all those he mentions that were drowned were lost by the Duke's obstinacy in not coming away sooner; And that was occasioned by a false courage to make it appear, as he though he had what he had not; By which he was the occasion of losing so many Lives. But when his own was in danger, and there was no hope of saving any but those that were with Him, he gave the Duke of Marlborough his Sword to hinder Numbers of People that to save their own Lives would have jumped into the Boat, notwithstanding his Royal Highness was there, that would have sunk it. This was done, and the Duke went off safe; and all the rest in the Ship were lost, as Mr Lediard gives an account, except my Lord Griffin, who had served the Duke long, who, when the Ship was sinking, threw himself out of a Window, and saved himself by catching hold of a Hen Coop. . . . All that Lediard relates to filling the boat with the priests and the dogs is true. But I don't know who else went in the boat, or whether they were of the same religion.[1]

There can be no doubt that this is the real story which John told Sarah in the deepest secrecy as soon as he and the other woebegone survivors from the shipwreck arrived in Edinburgh. That no inkling of his servant's opinion ever came to James seems almost certain. We, however, in this after-light can see quite plainly where the Churchills stood in relation to James. It is not merely want of sympathy, but deep disapproval. They served him because it was

[1] Spencer MSS.

their duty and their livelihood. He retained them because better servants could not be found elsewhere. But all this lay far below the surface. The whole ducal household arrived at Whitehall, for good or ill, in the summer of 1682, and Churchill was rewarded on December 21, 1682, for his patient, astute diplomacy and invaluable services of the past three years with the barony of Churchill of Aymouth, in the peerage of Scotland.[1]

[1] Wolseley misdates this 1683. The patent is at Blenheim.

Chapter Eleven

THE PRINCESS ANNE

1679–1685

FEW stories in our history are more politically instructive than the five years' pitiless duel between King Charles II and his ex-Minister Shaftesbury. The opposing forces were diversely composed, yet, as it proved, evenly balanced; the ground was varied and uncertain; the conditions of the combat were peculiarly English, the changes of fortune swift and unforeseeable, the issues profound and the stakes mortal. For the first three years Shaftesbury seemed to march with growing violence from strength to strength. Three separate Parliaments declared themselves with ever-rising spirit for his cause. London, its wealth, its magistrates, its juries, and its mob, were resolute behind him. Far and wide throughout the counties and towns of England the fear of "Popery and Slavery" dominated all other feelings and united under the leadership of the great Whig nobles almost all the sects and factions of the Centre and of the Left, as they had never been united even at the height of the Great Rebellion. Thus sustained, Shaftesbury set no limits to his aims or conduct. He exploited to the last ounce alike the treacheries of Montagu and the perjuries of Oates. He watched with ruthless eye a succession of innocent men, culminating in Lord Stafford, sent to their deaths on the scaffold or at Tyburn upon false testimony. He held high parley with the King, as if from power to power, demanded the handing over of Portsmouth and Hull to officers approved by Parliament, indicted the Duke of York before a London Grand Jury as a Popish recusant, threatened articles of impeachment against the Queen, and made every preparation in his power for an eventual resort to arms. This was the same Shaftesbury who, as a Minister in the Cabal, had acquiesced only four years before in the general policy of the Secret Treaty of Dover, and only two years before had been a party to the Declaration of Indulgence and the acceptance of subsidies from France.

The King, on the other hand, seemed during the first three years

to be almost defenceless. His weakness was visible to all. He was forced to leave Danby, his faithful agent, for whose actions he had assumed all possible responsibility, whom he had covered with his royal pardon, to languish for five years in the Tower. He dared not disown the suborned or perjured Crown witnesses brought forward in his name to prove a Popish plot, nor shield with his prerogative of mercy their doomed victims. He had to suffer the humiliation of banishing his brother and the insult of hearing his Queen accused of plotting his murder. He had to submit to, or perhaps even connive at, his beloved son Monmouth joining the leaders of his foes.

All the while he lay in his voluptuous, glittering Court, with his expensive mistresses and anxious courtiers, dependent upon the dear-bought gold of France. And meanwhile behind the wrathful proceedings of justly offended faction-fanned Parliaments, Puritan England was scandalized, Cromwellians who had charged at Marston Moor or Naseby prayed that old days might come again, and the common people were taught to believe that the Great Plague and Fire had fallen upon the land as God's punishment for the wickedness of its ruler. Vulnerable in the last degree, conscious of his peril, and yet superb in patient courage, the profound, imperturbable, and crafty politician who wore the challenged crown endured the fury of the storm and awaited its climax. And in the end triumph! Triumph in a completeness and suddenness which seemed incredible to friends and enemies alike.

This was a civil war whose battles and sieges, whose stratagems and onfalls, were represented by State trials, constitutional deadlocks, and Parliamentary or municipal manœuvres. It was a war of and for public opinion, and as bitter and ferocious as many waged in the open field. Its events were the birth-throes of party government, whose sire was the Popish, and whose dam the Rye House, Plot. There had been *sides* in the Great Rebellion; henceforward there would be *parties*, less picturesque, but no less fierce. The three General Elections in succession required and evolved all those organizations—clubs, colours, and slogans—with which in later and gentler ages we are only too familiar. The mutual hatreds and injuries of the Whigs and Tories engraved their rival symbols for two hundred years on English life. In vain was Marlborough at the head of victorious armies to accuse "the detested names of Whig and Tory"; in vain would Chatham pronounce his majestic invocation, "Be one people!" The metals which were now molten were cast in moulds destined to decide the character and practical working

of Parliamentary institutions not only in our island, but in every country where and while they have thrived.

The turning-point of the conflict was the King's sudden dissolution of the Parliament of 1680. After the third election both Houses were convened at Oxford in March 1681, to avoid the violent pressures which the citizens, apprentices, and the mass of London could exert. To this Parliament, the last of the reign, both factions resorted in the temper of civil war. It was "like a Polish Diet." The Whig chiefs arrived surrounded by their armed retainers, who eyed the King's guards with open menace. The new House of Commons seemed only to be set with more zealous purpose upon excluding James from the throne. Shaftesbury, after the Royal Speech, handed the King what was virtually an ultimatum in favour of the succession of Monmouth. "My lord, as I grow older I grow more steadfast," replied the King. Confronted with the attitude of the assembly, and finding that Oxford was a camp of armed bands whom a word might set at each other's throats, Charles proclaimed the dissolution, and lost no time in withdrawing under strong escort to Windsor. Shaftesbury made a resolute bid to keep both Houses in illegal session. But the sense of their corporate function had passed from the minds of the individual members. They who had seemed resolute to undertake all fell to pieces "as if a gust of wind had suddenly scattered all the leaves from a tree."[1]

Stripped of their Parliamentary engines, the Whigs turned to conspiracy, and beneath conspiracy grew murder. Their declared purpose to exclude James from the succession broadened among many into naked republicanism. "Any design but a commonwealth," said Shaftesbury to Lord Howard, "would not go down with my supporters now."[2] There can be no doubt that schemes and even preparations for an armed national rising were afoot; nor that some of the greatest Parliamentary personages were active in them. Behind the machinations of the famous Whig leaders darker and even more violent forces stirred. Rumbold and other grim Cromwellian figures stalked the streets of London. A design to assassinate the King and the Duke where the road from Newmarket passed Rumbold's home, the Rye House, was discussed, and to some extent concerted, by a group of plotters in a London tavern. But while these projects, general and particular, germinated in the soil, the mood of the nation gradually but decisively changed; its anti-

[1] Ranke, *History of England*, iv, 135.

[2] James Ferguson, *Robert Ferguson the Plotter*, p. 72.

Catholic rage had exhausted itself in the shedding of innocent blood and public sympathy gradually turned to the sufferers and against their loud-mouthed, hard-swearing, vainglorious, implacable pursuers.

Presently the King felt strong enough to prosecute Shaftesbury for high treason, and when the Grand Jury of Middlesex, elected by the City—"that republic by the King's side"—threw out the Bill, he turned his attention to the processes by which the London sheriffs were chosen. By a prolonged and elaborate series of political manœuvres, and with the assistance of a friendly Lord Mayor, Tory sheriffs were declared elected, and juries ardent for the Crown became available. Shaftesbury, as soon as he found himself undermined by such appointments, and perhaps alarmed by the whispers of murder plottings which reached his ears, fled to Holland, and died almost immediately in exile. The disclosure of the Rye House Plot, coming on so favourable a tide, aroused a volume of sympathy for the King which in its force and passion became almost a counterpart of the fears and angers created by the Popish Plot. From all parts of the country loyal addresses began to pour in. Many nobles and country gentlemen who had for long avoided the Court presented themselves dutifully at Whitehall. One by one the Rye House plotters, and even those who had been present when they plotted, were sent by the tribunals to the scaffold. Writs of *Quo warranto* impugned the authority of municipal corporations. In the blast of popular disapproval, and without any Parliament to focus their cause, the power of the Whigs collapsed and was for a time destroyed. The Tory reaction, blowing as savagely as the Whig aggressions that had called it forth, exacted innocent blood in its turn. Shaftesbury was already gone. Howard turned King's evidence. Russell and Algernon Sidney died on the scaffold, and Essex escaped it only by suicide in the Tower. These deaths were but the vicarious expiation of the shameful executions of the Popish Plot.

By 1683 the King was as safe on his throne as on the morrow of his coronation, nearly a quarter of a century before. He had come through an ordeal which few British sovereigns, certainly neither his father nor his brother, could have survived. For all his cynicism and apparent indolence and levity he had preserved the hereditary principle of the monarchy and its prerogative inviolate. He had successfully defended his brother's right to the throne; he had championed the honour of his Queen; he had obtained a more complete control of the national and municipal organs of government and

of the judiciary than had existed since the days of his grandfather. He had never lost the support of the Episcopacy. He was poor, he was a pensioner of France, he was powerless on the Continent; but as long as he avoided the expenses of a foreign war he was master in his own house.

The next three years, 1683–85, form an interlude of peace and domestic sunshine in John Churchill's anxious, toilsome, exciting life. He was reabsorbed into the heart and centre of the Court he knew so well, and in which he had lived from childhood. He enjoyed the accustomed intimate favour of the King and the Duke. We read of his being one of Charles's two or three regular tennis partners[1]—with Godolphin and Feversham, "all so excellent players that if one beat the other 'tis alternatively"—and of accompanying the royal party on various progresses or excursions. He was promoted to the colonelcy of the King's Own Royal Regiment of Dragoons.[2] This improved the family income, but gave rise to jealous carpings.

Let's cut our meat with spoons!
The sense is as good
As that Churchill should
Be put to command the Dragoons.

The appointment was, however, not ill justified by events. Otherwise no important office or employment fell to his lot. It was perhaps the only easy, care-free time he ever had. No tortuous channels to thread, no intricate combinations to adjust, no doubtful, harassing, dire choices to take! Peace and, if not plenty, a competence. But as the dangers of the State and the need for action or manœuvre ceased, he subsided into the agreeable obscurities of home and social life. Charles seems to have regarded him as a well-liked courtier and companion whom he had long been used to have about him, as a military officer of a certain standing, as a discreet, attractive, experienced figure, a cherished piece of furniture in the royal household, but not at this time at all considered in the larger sphere of public affairs. Indeed, when he heard Churchill's name mentioned as one who might be Sunderland's Ministerial colleague the King said lightly that "he was not resolved to have two idle Secretaries of State."[3] The Court subsequently explained the rumour by cheerfully affirming that Churchill had lately been "learn-

[1] Rutland Papers, *H.M.C.*, xii, Part II, 81.
[2] The commission, dated November 19, 1683, is in the Blenheim MSS.
[3] *H.M.C.*, vii, 362–363.

ing to write." So all was calm and quiet, and far better than those wearing years of journeyings to and from The Hague or Edinburgh to London on errands of delicacy or distress.

John could now live a great deal with his wife. He was even able upon the pay and perquisites of Colonel of the Dragoons and Captain of a troop of Life Guards—the latter a lucrative appointment—to settle in the country. For the first time they had a home.

The Jennings family owned an old house and a few acres close to St Albans, on the opposite side of the town to their manor of Sandridge. It was called Holywell House on account of a well in which the nuns of Sopwell had softened their hard bread in bygone times. It stood on the road close to the bridge over the river Ver. About 1681 John seems to have bought out Frances' share in this small property, which, together with the manor of Sandridge, was then owned by the two sisters. Evidently Sarah was attached to her native town and family lands. Some time in 1684 she and her husband pulled down the old house, which was ill situated, and built themselves a modest dwelling in another part of the grounds, surrounded by well-laid-out gardens and furnished with a fine fishpond. The character and size of Holywell House can be judged from a contemporary sketch. Here was Marlborough's home for life. The pomp and magnificence of Blenheim Palace were for his posterity. Indeed, he seems to have been somewhat indifferent to the noble monument which the nation reared in honour of his victories. It was Holywell House that claimed his affections. Within it he gathered the pictures and treasures which he steadily collected, and upon its pediment in later life he portrayed the trophies of his battles. Here it was he lived with Sarah and his children whenever he could escape from Court or service. It was to this scene, as his letters show, with its ripening fruit and maturing trees, that his thoughts returned in the long campaigns, and here the main happiness of his life was enjoyed. Holywell House was pulled down in 1827. The elaborate prospectus of its sale contained no reference to its builder and first occupant. The river Ver has been canalized, and no recognizable trace remains.

Meanwhile their family grew. Poor "Hariote" was gone, but another daughter, Henrietta, born on July 19, 1681, survived the deadly perils of seventeenth-century infancy. At her christening we meetas a godmother an old acquaintance, Arabella. Her relations with the Duke had long ended. Provision had been made for "her train

of bastards." The girls were in convents or being brought up as Catholics in France. Her son, a noble youth, in high favour, already showed the quality of the future Duke of Berwick. Arabella could now thankfully return to full respectability. Happily married to a Colonel Godfrey, she was to live to old age and be the witness of many surprising family events. John's third daughter, Anne—note the name—was born on February 27, 1684. She too thrived.

Although to outward appearance King Charles's Court was as brilliant and gay as ever, its inner life was seared by tragedy. The executions of great nobles whom everybody knew, like Stafford on the one side and Russell on the other; the ugly death in the Tower of Essex, so recently a trusted Minister, cast their shadows upon wide circles of relations and friends. Fear and grief lurked beneath the wigs and powder, ceremonies and masquerades. John Churchill seems at this time to have been most anxious to withdraw his wife altogether from the fevered scene, and to live with her in the country, riding to London only as required by his duties, which were also his livelihood. Sarah dutifully obeyed her husband's wish. But an event occurred which frustrated these modest ambitions.

Hitherto little has been said about the Princess Anne.[1] Henceforward she becomes the fulcrum of our tale. And here and now Sarah begins to play her commanding part. Her first contact with Anne had been in childhood. They had met in children's play at St James's when Sarah was ten and Princess Anne was only six. They were thrown together far more frequently when Sarah came to live in the palace, from 1673 onward. From the outset Anne became deeply attached to the brilliant, vivacious being who blossomed into womanhood before her childish eyes. The Princess was fascinated by Sarah's knowledge, self-confidence, and strength of character. She was charmed by her care and devotion, and by all her resources of fun and comfort which so naturally and spontaneously came to her aid. Very early indeed in these young lives did those ties of love, kindling into passion on one side, and into affection and sincere friendship on the other, grow deep and strong, as yet unheeded by the bustling world. There was a romantic, indeed perfervid, element in Anne's love for Sarah to which the elder girl responded warmly several years before she realized the

[1] There is no very satisfactory biography of Queen Anne; that by Miss Anne Strickland in her *Lives of the Queens of England* (1841) has not been superseded, and is spoilt by its Jacobite partisanship. On the other hand, it is unfair to derive one's portrait of Anne from the writings of the Duchess of Marlborough.

worldly importance of such a relationship. "The beginning of the Princess's kindness for me," wrote Sarah in after-days,

> had a much earlier date than my entrance into her service. My promotion to this honour was wholly owing to impressions she had before received to my advantage; we had used to play together when she was a child, and she even then expressed a particular fondness for me. This inclination increased with our years. I was often at Court, and the Princess always distinguished me by the pleasure she took to honour me, preferably to others, with her conversation and confidence. In all her parties for amusement I was sure by her choice to be one. . . .[1]

The passage of time gradually but swiftly effaced the difference in age, and Sarah as a married woman and mother at twenty-one exercised only a stronger spell upon the Princess of seventeen. "A friend," says Sarah,

> was what she most coveted, and for the sake of friendship which she did not disdain to have with me, she was fond even of that equality which she thought belonged to it. She grew uneasy to be treated by me with the form and ceremony due to her rank, nor could she bear from me the sound of words which implied in them distance and superiority. It was this turn of mind which made her one day propose to me, that whenever I should happen to be absent from her, we might in all our letters write ourselves by feigned names, such as would import nothing of distinction of rank between us. Morley and Freeman were the names her fancy hit upon, and she left me to choose by which of them I would be called. My frank, open temper naturally led me to pitch upon Freeman, and so the Princess took the other, and from this time Mrs Morley and Mrs Freeman began to converse as equals, made so by affection and friendship.

John Churchill's relations with the Princess, although on a different plane from those of Sarah, were nevertheless lighted by a growing personal attachment. His own interest in her fortunes is obvious; but upon this supervened as time passed that kind of respectful yet sentimental devotion which Lord Melbourne showed to the young Queen Victoria. He regarded himself increasingly as Anne's protector and guide. He was her shield against the shocks and intrigues of politics and stood between her and the violent men of both parties. To secure her safety, her well-being, her peace of mind against all assaults, even in the end against Sarah herself, became the rule of his life. Never by word or action in the course of their long association, with all its historic stresses—not to the very end—not

[1] *Conduct*, pp. 9–10.

even in the bitter hour of dismissal—did he vary in his fidelity to Anne as Princess or Queen, nor in his chivalry to her as a woman.

Anne had but to reach maturity to become a factor of national consequence. Her marriage lay in the cold spheres of State policy. By King Charles's command, and with her father's acquiescence, she, like her elder sister, had been strictly bred a Protestant. Bishop Compton, a soldier before he was a priest—a very martinet of the Reformed religion—had been her preceptor. She had imbibed his teachings with simple, unquestioning, retentive faith. For her the Church of England was henceforward the one sure hope in this world and the next. The popularity of the union of William of Orange with Princess Mary in 1677 had already helped the King to hold his difficult balances at home and abroad. Here in days still critical was the opportunity for another royal Protestant alliance. Prince George of Hanover, afterwards King George I, was brought to England upon a plan of marrying the Princess, but he "left the British shores somewhat dishonourably without justifying the hopes he had excited."[1] International politics may have played their part in this defection, for Louis XIV was by no means unconcerned. Anne, though but fifteen at the time, was deeply offended, and ever afterwards nourished a prejudice against her eventual successor. Her sentimental flirtation with the Earl of Mulgrave—rides in Windsor Park, poems (he was a poet), and love-letters—was sternly suppressed by the royal authority. Lord Mulgrave, banished from the Court, found himself in a leaky frigate under orders for Tangier. It is even possible that Sarah was concerned in dispersing this fairyland aberration. Royal princesses have to take the rough with the smooth.

Charles now turned to a Danish prince, and this time his choice was not obnoxious to the French King. Indeed, Louis seems to have regarded the proceeding as a fair compromise. Although Prince George of Denmark was, of course, a Lutheran Protestant, he represented only a diminished Continental state, and the whole transaction seemed consigned to a modest plane. Prince George obeyed the command of his brother, the Danish King Christian V; and in July 1683 Colonel Churchill was sent to Denmark to conduct him to England to fall in love with the Princess Anne and marry her forthwith. George of Denmark was a fine-looking man, tall, blond, and good-natured. He had a reputation for personal courage, and by a cavalry charge had rescued his brother during a battle between the Danes and the Dutch in 1677. He was neither clever nor learned

[1] Mrs Thomson, *Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, i, 50.

—a simple, normal man, without envy or ambition, and disposed by remarkable appetite and thirst for all the pleasures of the table. Charles's well-known verdict, "I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober, but there is nothing in him," does not do justice to the homely virtues and unfailing good-humour of his staid and trustworthy character. It may well be that the Churchills had some part in arranging this marriage. Charles Churchill had been appointed ten years before a page of honour to King Christian. He had accompanied Prince George to England upon an earlier visit. We do not know what confidences may have been interchanged by these assistants, but at any rate Anne accepted with complacency what fortune brought her. Her uncle the King had so decided; her father acquiesced; Louis XIV was content; and only William of Orange was displeased.

On July 28, 1683, the marriage was solemnized with royal pomp and popular approbation. Prince George derived a revenue of £10,000 a year from some small Danish islands. Parliament voted Anne £20,000 a year, and the King established the royal pair and their suite in a residence called the Cockpit, adjoining the Palace of Whitehall, standing where the Treasury Chambers are to-day.

This marriage of policy in which the feelings of the parties had been only formally consulted stood during twenty-four years every ordinary strain and almost unequalled family sorrows. Anne suffered either a miscarriage or a still-born baby with mechanical regularity year after year. Only one cherished son lived beyond his eleventh birthday. At forty-two she had buried sixteen children; and when so many hopes and grave issues hung upon her progeny, none survived her. Her life was repeatedly stabbed by pain, disappointment, and mourning, which her placid courage, strong, patient spirit, firm faith, and abiding sense of public duty enabled her to sustain. Her life, so largely that of an invalid, attached itself to grand simplicities—her religion, her husband, her country's welfare, her beloved friend and mentor, Sarah. These dominants for many years wrought the harmony of her circle, and their consequences adorned her name and reign with unfading glory. Her love for her husband was richly renewed, and she knew no bounds in her admiration of his capacities. The romantic side of her nature found its satisfactions in her strangely intense affection for Sarah. And behind, ever faithful in her service, lay the pervading genius of Marlborough with his enchanted sword.

Anne lost no time in persuading her father to appoint Sarah one

of her Ladies of the Bedchamber. The salary was not large (£200), but Sarah wished to serve the Princess. "The Duke," wrote Anne,[1] "had just come in when you were gone. He has given his consent for me to have you with me, and I assure you it is a great pleasure to me. I should thank you for offering it, but I am not good at compliments." Cavillers have fastened upon the word 'offering'; but the relations of the two women were already such as to reduce the point to insignificance. It was a gracious turn of phrase in Anne to a friend whose society she desired, and not a condition in a diplomatic protocol. In a manuscript essay by Sarah, hitherto unpublished, copies of which are at Blenheim and Althorp, called *A Faithful Account of Many Things*, the following suggestive, impersonal, and of course retrospective account is given of their relations:

> ★The Dutchess had address and accomplishments, sufficient to engage the affections and confidence of her Mistress without owing anything to the want of them in others. But yet this made room for her the sooner and gave her some advantage; and she now began to employ all Her wit and all Her vivacity and almost all Her time to divert, and entertain, and serve, the Princess; and to fix that favour, which now one might easily observe to be encreasing towards her every day. This favour quickly became a passion; and a Passion which possessed the Heart of the Princess too much to be hid. They were shut up together for many hours daily. Every moment of Absence was counted a sort of tedious, lifeless, state. To see the Dutchess was a constant joy; and to part with her for never so short a time, a constant Uneasiness; As the Princess's own frequent expressions were. This worked even to the jealousy of a Lover. She used to say she desired to possess her wholly: and could hardly bear that she should ever escape, from this confinement, into other Company.

About 1712, Bishop Burnet compiled from Sarah's papers a substantial justification of her conduct towards Queen Anne. Two copies of this, one in the Bishop's own handwriting, have now been found at Blenheim. The Duchess was not satisfied with the production, and marked it "Not well done." Its introduction may, nevertheless, be of interest as an unpublished contemporary document.[2]

> ★I came extream young into the Court and had the luck to be liked by manny in it, but by none more particularly than the Queen who took such pleasure in my company that as she had me much about

[1] Coxe, i, 27.

[2] See Appendix I.

her, so upon her marriage she prevailed with her Father that I should be a Lady of her Bedchamber. Her Court was so oddly composed that it was no extraordinary thing for me to be before them all in her favour, and confidence, this grew upon me to as high a degree, as was possible, *to all, that was passionately fond and tender*, nothing stood in my way, nothing was hard for me. I thought my Selfe, (all others thought it too) that I was as secure in a continuance of a high degree of favour, as ever any person was. I upon such an advancement considered what I ought to do in order to deserve and to maintain it. The great principle I laid down in myself was to serve Her with an absolute fidelity and a constant zeal. But by fidelity I did not only mean not to betray her, not to discover [disclose] her secrets, and to be true to her in everything she trusted me with: but to avoid everything, that looked like dissimulation, and flattery, even tho I saw it might displease her; I was convinced that Princes were ruined by flatterers: I carried this so far as to think it was a part of flattery, not to tell her everything that was in any sort amisse in her. I saw poor K. James ruined by this that nobody would honestly tell him of his danger until it was past recovery: and that for fear of displeasing him. I therefore resolved to say everything that I thought concerned her to know, whom I served, with as much *affection*, as fidelity. . . .

As Sarah had to attend the Princess at Tunbridge Wells and elsewhere, and John himself still had to travel about with the Duke of York, the couple were occasionally separated, and there survive the following letters between them:[1]

John to Sarah

[1683–84]

*I had writ to you by the post, but that I was persuaded this would be with you sooner. You see I am very just [regular] in writing, and I hope I shall find by the daily receiving of yours that you are so. I hope in God you are out of all danger of miscarrying, for I swear to you I love you better than all the rest of the world put together, wherefore you ought to be so just as to make me a kind return, which will make me much happier than aught else in this world can do. If I can get a passage a Sunday I will come, but if I cannot I shall be with you a Monday morning by nine of the clock; for the Duke will leave this place by six. Pray [give] my most humble respects to your fair daughter, and believe me what I am with all my heart and soul,

Yours . . .

[1] These letters, hitherto unpublished, are from the Blenheim MSS. The first letter can be dated roughly by the fact that Churchill's first surviving daughter, Henrietta, was born on July 19, 1681, and his second, Anne, on February 27, 1684.

Pray tell Poidvine [his valet] I would have him wait upon Mr Legge for the note for the horses.

Friday night

[1684–85]

*I was in hopes to have found my dear soul here or at least a letter so that I might have known when you do come. There is no Gentleman of the Bedchamber here, so that I am forced to wait, which I hope will make you come before your clothes are made, and if you do not, as soon as I see a Gentleman of the Bedchamber's face, I will come away to you, for I long with all my heart and soul to be with you. Pray let me hear from you to-night if you do not come to-morrow.

For my Lady Churchill

[1684–85]

*I have not heard from you; however I will not forbear writing to let you know that your children are very well and that to-morrow we go to town and the next morning the Duke will be at Tunbridge, and I hope there will be room in the coach for me to come. The Duke will stay but one night, and if I come with him I must be forced to go back with him, so that I hope you Will take it kindly my coming a hundred miles for the happiness of one night

Monday

For my Lady Churchill at the Princess' at Tunbridge

[1685–86]

*I did yesterday receive two of yours, one of them having been forgot by a mistake of Sir John Worden's.[1] You do in one of them complain of my not writing. I do swear to you that I have not failed one day writing except yesterday and I had not then missed but that I was a-hacking with the King, and the post went just as we came home. So that you see how little reason you have to be angry with me, and I do assure you if you do continue to be angry with me you are very unjust, for I do love you with all my heart and soul. Lady Anne asks for you very often so that I think you would do well if you wrote to her to thank her for her kindnesses in inquiring after your health. The pains which you complain on is certainly caused by your catching cold, so that if you have any kindness for me you will have a care of yourself, for your life is as dear to me as is my own. I have nothing more to add but that you and your children are the dearest things to me in this world.

Wednesday

For my Lady Churchill St James's

The closing years of Charles II were calm. In the wake of the

[1] Or Werden's.

passions of the Popish Plot and on the tide of Tory reaction the country regathered something of its poise. It seemed after a while as if the executions of the Popish and Rye House Plots had balanced each other, and a fresh start became possible. We observe the formation of a mass of central opinion, which, if it did not mitigate the strife of parties, could at least award the palm of success to the least culpable. This peculiarly English phenomenon could never henceforward be disregarded. Any party which ranged too far upon its own characteristic course was liable to offend a great body of men who, though perhaps marked by party labels, were by no means prepared to associate themselves with party extravagances.

At the end of the reign we see Charles working with several representatives of this moderate Tory view. Among these, opposed to Popery, opposed to France, mildly adverse to Dissent, content with peace, and respecting the government of King *and* Parliament, the famous Halifax was pre-eminent. His nature led him to turn against excess in any quarter; he swam instinctively against the stream. The taunt of "Trimmer" levelled at him by disappointed partisans has been accepted by history as the proof of his uprightness and sagacity. He compared himself with justice to the temperate zone which lies between "the regions in which men are frozen and the regions in which they are roasted." He was the foremost statesman of these times; a love of moderation and sense of the practical seemed in him to emerge in bold rather than tepid courses. He could strike as hard for compromise as most leaders for victory. Memorable were the services which Halifax had rendered to the Crown and the Duke of York. His reasoned oratory, his biting sarcasm, his personal force and proud independence, had turned the scale against the first Exclusion Bill. His wise counsels had aided the King at crucial moments, and he himself often formed the rallying-point for men of goodwill. His greatest work for the nation and for modern times was yet to be done. Meanwhile he stood, a trusted Minister, at King Charles's side in the evening of a stormy day.

> Jotham of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
> Endued by nature and by learning taught
> To move assemblies, who but only tried
> The worse a while, then chose the better side;
> Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too,
> So much the weight of one brave man can do.[1]

Halifax must have represented Churchill's political views and

[1] Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel.*

temperament far more truly than any other statesman. Whether or not John learned war from Turenne, he certainly learned politics from Halifax. As we watch the Great Trimmer turning from side to side, from faction to faction, from Monmouth to William, or back again to James, yet always pursuing his aim of sobriety and appeasement at home and of marshalling all the best in England against Popery, autocracy, and France, we can almost see John's mind keeping pace and threading silently the labyrinths of intrigue in his footsteps. We are sure that when Halifax fought the Whigs against perjured testimony for the life of Stafford, and fought the Crown and the Tories against packed juries for the lives of Russell and Sidney, he carried with him the heartfelt sympathies of the Churchill who had resented the condemnation of Argyll, and whose humane conduct at the head of armies the histories of friend and foe were to proclaim.

In spite of their difference in age, rank, and authority a considerable measure of friendship—respect in the younger, regard in the elder—already subsisted between the two men. We have printed what Halifax wrote to his brother, Henry Savile, about the possible vacancy in the Paris Embassy in 1680—words never meant for Churchill's eye and never seen by him. We know how ardently they both desired to wean James back to conformity with the Church of England in 1681. We shall see them marching—though at different speeds and in different guise—the same difficult, perilous roads in 1687 and 1688. And far on, in 1693, after they have both intrigued with the exiled Jacobite Court, it is the renowned Halifax who goes bail for Marlborough against the displeasure of King William, and is struck off the Privy Council for his pains. It was a long and honourable association, undisturbed by indescribable perplexities, of men who all their lives meant the same thing for England, and in the main achieved their purpose.

Another figure, at that time classed among the moderates, who had sat at the council board was Sir Edward Seymour. He was "the great Commoner" of those days. A fervent Tory of touchy, rancorous temper, of independent and undependable character, with great wealth and position, he marshalled a hundred members from the over-represented West Country. He could upon occasion have produced an army from the same regions for a national cause. He was the first Speaker of the House of Commons who was not a lawyer. His pride in his connexion with the Seymour of the Reformation and his intense hatred of Catholicism made him an inflexible

opponent of James; but, on the other hand, the principle of Divine Right forbade him to vote for the Exclusion Bill. His pompous austerity was not proof against the rapid alternations of favour and neglect which marked his career. He was easily tamed by office, and as easily invigorated by the loss of it. He did not trouble to reconcile his words in Opposition with his deeds as a Minister; nor *vice versa.* He defended with vigour from the Government bench the abuses he had denounced as a private Member, and blithely renewed his virtue when deprived of power. On the whole, he was the most magnificent, though by no means the most successful, place-hunter of his day. We shall meet him again, in 1688 and also later.

A third councillor, by hereditary distinction (for his father had been a trusted Lord Chancellor), Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, was a devout Churchman, who, more than any other layman, could influence the bishops. Although he belonged to what would now be called the High Church party, he was so much alarmed at the intolerant processes of the Catholics in France and at the persecutions launched by Louis XIV that he tried to mitigate by every means the quarrel of the Episcopacy with the Dissenters, and to establish a general unity among all the Protestant bodies. His influence in the revolution of 1688 was to be profound.

But the daily work of administration was mainly in the hands of three men of more easy and practical temper, if of less solid political power. Laurence Hyde—now Earl of Rochester, "a Danby in a minor key"; the elusive, imponderable Sunderland; and always, "never in the way and never out of the way," Churchill's lifelong friend Godolphin. These were lightly called "the Chits." With all of them Churchill was intimate. The two last, and especially Godolphin, represented the nearest approach in those times to the high permanent civil servants of the present day. Well trained and deeply informed, smooth and competent in business, without marshalled interests behind them, or vehement party views, they adapted themselves readily to the royal will, and sought chiefly to give it a prudent and effective expression. They stood for less, but performed more than the more rugged political leaders.[1]

The King himself basked in the mellower light which had followed so much rough weather. He had overcome his enemies; and at whatever cost to his dignity or honour had restored peace at home and kept out of war abroad. He could afford to forgive Monmouth. He was strong enough to bring back James. He revolved with

[1] *Cf.* Feiling, *History of the Tory Party*, chapter vii.

tolerant mind Halifax's desire to summon Parliament, and might well expect that it would be loyal and serviceable. He still balanced and measured the grievous, insoluble problems with which he was oppressed: the ferocious divisions of his people, his want of money—that damnable thing—his dependence upon France, the odious state of Europe, the dangers of renewed Parliamentary strife, and, above all, the anxieties of the succession. For all his loves and troop of bastards, he had no legitimate heir. Strong and unswerving as he had been for the strict application of the principle of hereditary right, no one knew better than he the awful dangers which James's religion and character would bring upon the land. In spite of his own profound leanings to the old faith of Christendom, he had never lost contact with, and had in the main preserved the confidence of, the Church of England. He had used the laws of England and its Constitution as effective weapons in his warfare with the Whigs. He had never broken these laws in the process, nor trespassed beyond an arguable legality. He knew and loved his brother well, and foresaw how James's virtues and vices alike would embroil him with a nation as stubborn and resolute as he.

Yet where else to turn? How England would have rejoiced could he have but given her his handsome, gifted, courageous by-blow—"our beloved Protestant Duke"! But never would he vitiate the lawful succession of the Crown, nor tolerate that picking and choosing between rival claims which would transform an hereditary into an elective monarchy. Had he not for this wrestled with his people and his Parliament? Was not the fate of Russell, of Sidney, of Essex, a proof of his invincible resolve?

Then there was William; the busy—nay, tireless—fiery but calculating, masterful and accepted ruler of Holland, and foremost champion of the Protestant world. The blood royal of England flowed in his veins, and Mary his wife was second heir-presumptive to the Crown. Here was a foreign sovereign, backed by a constitutional government and loyal fleets and armies, whose profound interest in the succession had never been disguised. How shrewd and patient William had been; how skilfully he had steered a course through the English storms! Charles could admire kingcraft in another. William had in no way added to his difficulties; he had throughout professed a warm and dutiful affection for him. The Dutchman's personal relations with the leaders of both the English parties were widespread, direct, and close. He maintained an extensive correspondence across the North Sea, and was almost as closely

immersed in English and Scottish affairs as in those of Holland. But he never committed himself to supporting the Exclusion Bills or any of the alternative projects for limiting the prerogatives of a Popish king. In vain did the Whigs appeal to him to declare himself in favour of the Exclusion Bill, saying in effect, "Of course, this will give you your chance." William knew better. He had seen clearly that, with James excluded, Monmouth would become a far more formidable rival. He saw his own chance would only come at a second remove. But he understood James thoroughly, and placed a steady confidence in his capacity to break his neck. The Prince of Orange was sure that James would never abandon the attempt to compel the English nation to submit to autocratic rule and Catholic conversion, and equally sure that the English nation would never submit to such designs. Hence in his far-seeing way he did not wish James's powers to be specially limited by law. It was better for William that James should have a free hand, and if this led him to disaster, then at least his successor would not be a king with a mutilated prerogative.

Charles comprehended this situation with a nice taste; he knew all the moves upon the board. But what more could he do? At any rate, it seemed that time might be allowed to play its part. The King was only fifty-four; his health in general at this time seemed robust. To many intimates his life seemed as good as that of his brother. He could not measure the deep inroads which continuous sexual excitement had wrought upon his vigorous frame. Another ten years, to which he could reasonably look forward, might clarify the whole scene. So he returned with cordial acquiescence to the pleasures and amusements of his Court, toyed with Halifax's proposals for a new Parliament, rejoiced that the ship of State was for the moment on an even keel, and left the baffling problems of the future to solve themselves. They did so.

Meanwhile the Duke of York shared in the revivified popularity of the Crown. He became again in fact, if not in form, Lord High Admiral. The King, resting on his laurels, resigned much policy to his hand. He was looked upon as the leader of the extreme Tories. Had he not, it was said by persons who utterly misread the forces at work, been right all the time with his counsels of firmness? Had he not been skilful in managing the Scottish Parliament? Did not his sincere convictions and his bravery afloat and ashore deserve the highest respect? Versifiers wrote:[1]

[1] *Cit.* Feiling, p. 198.

The glory of the British line,
Old Jimmy's come again.

Indeed, the ardour of the Tory reaction began to cause some misgivings among the ablest counsellors of Charles II. Figures like Roger L'Estrange, long Charles's censor and pamphleteer, represented at the opposite end of the political scale opinions as dangerous and odious to the nation as those muttered by the Rye House conspirators. The lawyer Jeffreys, now the Tory Lord Chief Justice, whose brutal nature, savage partisanship, and high professional gifts made him a perfect instrument of judicial murder, ruled the Bench. Even those who most welcomed the turn of the tide were disquieted by its force, exclaiming as they shook their heads, "This is too good to last." But the Duke of York, now lord of the ascendant, held a different opinion.

Churchill was by this time in the middle thirties. He was in a position to judge men and affairs upon excellent information. It is only here and there that some record of his opinion exists. We can judge his politics chiefly by his friends. He was not accustomed to air his views upon grave matters, and such letters as have been preserved concern themselves only with private or family matters. We may be sure that he thought deeply and clearly about the succession to the Crown, upon which such fateful issues hung. In the course of his service to James he had been brought into sharp antagonism with Monmouth and his party. Gone were the comradeships of Maestricht days. Churchill was definitely ranged and classed with the Tories—and with the high Tories—against all interference with his master's hereditary rights. He had the best opportunities of informing himself about the King's health; he had seen him a few years before smitten with a mysterious and alarming illness. It was now certain that if James were alive at the death of King Charles, he would ascend the throne, and Churchill had every reason but one to hope for the highest favour and advancement at his hands. Yet that one adverse reason was enough to undo all. The wise, observant soldier who had dwelt so long at or near the centre of power had no doubts whatever of the clash that must ensue between his devout, headstrong, bigoted, resolute patron and the whole resisting power of a Protestant nation. Here again his course was determined. In defence of the Protestant religion he would sever all loyalties, extinguish all gratitudes, and take all necessary measures. His wife's intimate, affectionate relations with the Princess Anne, her offer to undertake the office of her Lady of the Bedchamber, must have been

in full accord with his wishes and designs. The influence, daily becoming decisive and dominant, which the Churchills exerted in the household of the Prince and Princess of Denmark was steadfastly used to strengthen and fortify its already marked Protestant character, and to link the young Princess with leading statesmen and divines who would confirm her vigorous faith.

The situation had, as we have seen, arisen naturally, by the invisible impulses of friendship and custom It had now become a definite and primary factor in the Churchills' fortunes, as it was presently to be in those of the nation. From this time forward John and Sarah began to be increasingly detached from the Duke's circle, and noticeably associated—beyond the religious gulf—with his younger daughter. Indeed, during the reign of James II Churchill was regarded by an informed foreign observer[1] as Princess Anne's friend and counsellor rather than the trusted servant of the new King. This in quiet times meant little, but a day was soon to come when it would mean everything. A connexion had been formed around the Protestant royal personage who stood third in the line of succession, cemented by a friendship and sympathy destined to withstand the shocks and trials of more than twenty years. This union of intense convictions, sentiments, habits, and interests was soon to be exposed to the sharpest and most violent tests, and to withstand them with the strength of solid rock.

The King seemed in his usual health at the beginning of 1685. After his dinner on the night of January 26 he sat, as was his custom, with the Duchess of Portsmouth and a small company of friends. Thomas Bruce, the Earl of Ailesbury, with whom Churchill's functions must often have brought him in friendly contact—to whom we owe most delightful, if sometimes untrustworthy, memoirs[2]—was on duty as Gentleman of the Bedchamber. He found the King "in the most charming humour possible." But

> when we came to the district of the bedchamber, I by my office was to light him to the bedchamber door, and giving the candle to the page of the backstairs, it went out, although a very large wax candle and without any wind. The page of the backstairs was more superstitious, for he looked on me, shaking his head.

The King chatted agreeably with his gentlemen as he undressed, and spoke about the repairing of Winchester Castle and the gardens

[1] See below, pp. 210, 218.
[2] *Memoirs*, pp. 85–87.

he was making there. He said to Ailesbury, "I will order John" (a familiar word for the Earl of Bath, the Groom of the Stole, who was with the King when a boy) "to put you in waiting the first time I go thither, and although it be not your turn, to show you the place I delight so in, and shall be so happy this week as to have my house covered with lead." "And God knows," comments Ailesbury, "the Saturday following he was put in his coffin."

That night Ailesbury, lying in the next room, and "sleeping but indifferently, perceived that the King turned himself sometimes, not usual for him." The next morning he was "pale as ashes" and "could not or would not say one word." A violent fit of apoplexy supervened, and after gamely enduring prolonged torture at the hands of his distracted physicians Charles II breathed his last. All untimely, the long-dreaded event had come to pass. The interlude of peace was over, and King James II ruled the land.

Chapter Twelve

SEDGEMOOR

1685

FOR two years past James had played an active second part in the government of the kingdom, and, once his brother's approaching end became certain, he concerned himself with every precaution necessary to ensure an unopposed succession. Indeed, it was not until after he had posted the Royal Guards at various important points, and had even obtained the dying King's signature to some measures of financial convenience, that, on the promptings of the Duchess of Portsmouth, he secured Charles's spiritual welfare by bringing a priest up the backstairs to receive him into the Church of Rome and give him extreme unction. Within a quarter of an hour of the King's death he met the Privy Council, whose duty it is to recognize the new sovereign. He laboured to contradict the belief that he was revengeful or inclined to arbitrary rule. He declared himself resolved to maintain both in State and Church a system of government established by law,

> for he recognized the members of the English Church as loyal subjects, he knew that the laws of England were sufficient to make the King a great monarch and that he would maintain the rights and prerogatives of the Crown, and would not invade any man's property.

It has even been asserted he went so far at this critical moment as to say that, "as regards his private religious opinions, no one should perceive that he entertained them," but that this sentence was deleted from the official report.[1]

These declarations were received by the dignitaries and magnates of the realm with profound relief and joy, and as the Royal Proclamation spread throughout the land it everywhere evoked expressions of gratitude and loyalty. Charles II had died at the moment when the Tory reaction was at its highest. The sentimental nature of the English people was stirred to its depth by the death of the King, who if he had tricked them often, had not, as they now felt, served them ill, and whose personal charm and human qualities and weaknesses

[1] Ranke, *History of England*, iv, 214-215.

That this proved to be Churchill's last visit to Paris was not, as will be shown in another volume, entirely his own fault. He returned to England at the beginning of April in time for the splendours of the coronation. An English peerage was conferred upon him, and he became Baron Churchill of Sandridge. Rougher work was soon at hand.

The news of King Charles's death fell like a thunderbolt on his well-loved, wayward bastard at The Hague. Monmouth by his natural vivacity had lent a fleeting gleam of gaiety to the dull, strait-laced routine of the Dutch Court. Politics apart, he had been received with genuine relish. But in the midst of dancing and ice-carnivals came the news that, instead of a father about to consummate an act of forgiveness, there ruled in England an uncle who had suffered insult and exile through his rivalry, whose last six years had been consumed in struggling against the party he led, and who hated him with all the hatred of intimacy, alike as Protestant and as Pretender.

Monmouth's mood of despair led him to seek in the companionship of his fond mistress, the beautiful Lady Wentworth, a shelter from the mischances of public life. He quitted The Hague at William's request within a few hours, and settled himself with his charming friend at Brussels. But more turbulent and daring spirits were not so agreeably soothed. Argyll—the "hunted partridge"—in his Dutch retreat brooded intently upon the sanctity of synodical as opposed to episcopal Christianity, and burned to be in the Highlands again at the head of his adoring clansmen. The plotter Ferguson, Lord Grey of Wark, Wade, and a dozen or more prominent men who had escaped from England and Scotland after the Rye House exposure, gripped Monmouth and bound him to a fatal design. Lady Wentworth herself, who loved him so well, loved also that he should be a king. She offered her jewels and wealth for his service. All these exiles had in their minds the picture of England in 1682. They saw again the fierce, eager, resolute forces—the great Whig lords, the House of Commons majorities, the City of London, the vindictive juries, the unrepresented Protestant masses—which had only yesterday seemed about to sweep their cause and themselves to triumph. They could not believe in the reality of a change of mood so swift and utter as had in fact occurred since then. Monmouth yielded against his better judgment to their importunities. It was agreed that Argyll should invade and rouse the Highlands and that Monmouth should land in England. Two tiny expeditions of three ships each, filled with munitions and bitter men of quality,

were organized from slender resources, and three weeks after Argyll had set out for Kirkwall Monmouth sailed for the Channel.

It was curious that William should not be able to prevent these descents upon a friendly State. We are assured by the highest authorities that he did his utmost, that he advised Monmouth to offer his services to the Empire against the Turks, that he exerted his authority upon the Admiralty of Amsterdam to prevent these sailings. His conduct was impeccable. It was also ineffectual. The unhappy Stadtholder was compelled to remain an impotent spectator of an enterprise which, whatever might happen, must conduce enormously to his advantage. If by chance Monmouth succeeded, England would become his Protestant and martial ally against France and French Catholicism. If Monmouth failed, as seemed certain, the succession to the English crown would be remarkably simplified. The most successful statesmen are those who know how by their actions or inactions to reconcile self-interest with correctitude.

Monmouth tossed on the waves for nineteen days, driven hither and thither by the winds. He escaped the numerous English cruisers which watched the Strait of Dover, and on June 11 dropped anchor in the same Dorsetshire port of Lyme Regis in which, as the reader will recall, Eleanor Drake had formerly suffered the severities of a siege, and for which her son-in-law, Sir Winston Churchill, was now Member of Parliament. The Duke and his confederates, who had beguiled the anxious voyage with Cabinet-making, landed forthwith. Sword in hand, they repaired to the market-place, where they were received with rapture by the townsfolk, who, like themselves, were still living in the England of the Popish Plot, and looked back with reverence to the great days of Blake and Cromwell. Monmouth issued a proclamation, drawn up by Ferguson, accusing the King of having murdered Charles II, and of every other crime; affirming also that he himself was born in wedlock, and claiming to be the champion of the laws, liberty, and religion of the realm. The rush of adherents to enlist baffled the clerks who registered their names. Within twenty-four hours he was joined by fifteen hundred men.

Meanwhile messengers from the Mayor of Lyme, who abandoned the contumacious town, were riding as fast as relays of horses could carry them to London. On the morning of June 13 they broke in upon Sir Winston with the startling news that his constituency was in rebellion. He took them to the palace, and, summoning his son, was conducted to the King.

This must have been a great day for old Sir Winston, and one in which all the harmonies of his life seemed to merge. Here was the King for whose sacred rights and line he had fought with sword and pen, for whom he had suffered so much, and who had done him the honour—no mere formality—of making him four times a grandfather, once more assaulted by rebellion. The same obstinate, traitorous forces—happily without votes—were again rampant in those same familiar scenes in which he had lived his life. The old cause was once more at stake in the old place; and here stood his son, Colonel of the Dragoons, the rising soldier of the day, high in the favour of the threatened monarch, long linked to his service—he it was who would march forward at the head of the Household troops, the *corps d'élite*, to lay the insolent usurper low. It was Sir Winston's apotheosis. There must have been a strong feeling of the continuity of history in this small group coincidence had brought together.

Instant resolves were taken. All available forces were ordered to Salisbury. That very night Churchill set out with four troops of the Blues and two of his own Dragoons—in all about three hundred horse—followed by Colonel Kirke with five companies of the Queen's Regiment.

Monmouth could scarcely have struck a more unlucky moment: Parliament was in session, the King's popularity was still at coronation height. An Act of Attainder against Monmouth was passed. The price of £5000 was set on his head. The Commons voted large, immediate supplies, and both Houses assured the King of their resolve to die in his defence. Moreover, the troops from Tangier had already landed. A prompt requisition was presented to William of Orange to send back, in accordance with the convention under which they served, the six English and Scottish regiments maintained in Dutch pay. William lost no time in complying. He had been unable to stop Monmouth's expedition from starting—it had got safely away; he could now make sure that it was destroyed. However painful it must have been to him on personal grounds to aid in the ruin of his inconvenient Protestant rival—so lately his attractive guest—he had to do his duty. The troops were dispatched forthwith; and William even offered to come over in person to take command of the royal army. This kindly proposal was declined.

Churchill marched south with great rapidity. He reached Bridport on June 17, having covered 120 miles in four days. The situation was even more serious than had been supposed when he left London.

The nobility and gentry, whose influence had so long returned Sir Winston to the House of Commons, were loyal in the Cavalier tradition to the King. The people, countryfolk and townsmen alike, were for the Duke and Dissenting Protestantism. The militias of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset had been partially mobilized under the general direction of the Duke of Albemarle. Their training and discipline were weak, and their hearts were with "the Protestant Duke." Reinforcements of regular troops were imperative. From Bridport Churchill wrote to the King:

> I am sorry to send your Majesty this ill news; which is [that] unless speedy course be taken, we are like to lose this [part of the] country to the rebels; for we have those two [militia] regiments run away a second time . . . and it happened thus: The Duke of Albemarle sends to Sir E. Phellipps and Colonel Luttrell, that he would be at Axminster on such a day with some forces, and would have them meet him there; so away marched those two regiments, one out of Chard and the other out of Crewkern; and when they came to the top of the hill within half a quarter of a mile of the town, there came out some country people, and said the Duke of Monmouth was in the town; at that one Captain Littleton cried out, We are all betrayed! so the soldiers immediately look[ed] one upon another, and threw down their arms, and fled, leaving their Officers and Colours behind; half, if not the greatest part, are gone to the rebels. I do humbly submit this to your Majesty's commands in what I shall do in it, for there is not any relying on these regiments that are left unless we had some of your Majesty's standing forces to lead them on and encourage them; for at this unfortunate news I never saw people so much daunted in my life.[1]

On the 18th Churchill was at Axminster, and on the 19th at Chard, in country which he knew so well (Ashe House was but eight miles away). Here his patrols came into contact with the hostile forces; and here also was a messenger from Monmouth reminding him of their old friendship and begging his aid. Churchill dismissed the messenger and sent the letter to the King.

Monmouth, at the head of some three thousand men and four guns, had entered Taunton on the 18th. Here he was received with royal state and lively affection. He was persuaded to proclaim himself King, thus confirming William in his sense of duty to James. The rebel numbers rose to above seven thousand, and he might have doubled them had he possessed the arms. His handful of cavalry,

[1] Northumberland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 99.

under Lord Grey of Wark, were mounted upon horses mostly untrained or even unbroken. His infantry were only partly armed with muskets, and for the rest depended upon scythes fastened on broomsticks. They had neither more nor less training than the militia, out of whom, indeed, they were largely composed. Nevertheless, in their zeal, in their comprehension of the quarrel, and in their stubborn courage, they were the ore from which the Ironsides had been forged.

We do not know what happened at Whitehall after Sir Winston went back to his dwelling, and John, appointed to the rank of Brigadier-General, set forth upon the Great West Road. He certainly hoped, and probably expected, that he would have the command of all the troops available; but in this he was disappointed. It may be that his old comradeship with Monmouth was counted against him. Certainly his own Protestantism and his close local association with the area affected by a Protestant movement might have caused misgivings in the Royal Council. At any rate, there were second thoughts. On June 19 Sunderland wrote to inform him that the Frenchman Feversham had been appointed Commander-in-Chief. This was a significant event; Feversham, though twelve years older, had never held Churchill's commands nor gained his distinction upon the Continent. Although present both at Maestricht and Enzheim and in several campaigns, Feversham had been only an observer. Churchill held an equal rank, and was an English-born soldier. He resented his supersession, and he knew it could only come from mistrust. The causes of his cleavage from his master, though deep, were latent and might never rise to the surface. He was still—even more than Feversham—to all eyes his faithful trusted agent and personal intimate. He had been for the last four years solidly and actively opposed to Monmouth. In James's cause he had countered him in the political negotiations and intrigue of the Exclusion Bills. His interests, whether as servant to James, as confidential adviser to Princess Anne, or even as friend of William, were all equally opposed to this interloper in the lawful succession to the Crown. Here was a campaign begun which he had in his own hands, on which his heart was set, and which he knew himself more capable than anyone to direct. He did not entirely conceal his anger. "I see plainly," he wrote on July 4 to Clarendon,[1] "that I am to have the trouble, and that the honour will be another's." One of the remaining links which bound him to James's personal fortunes

[1] Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, i, 141.

may well have broken here: nevertheless, with his customary self-control he subordinated his feelings to his duty and his policy, submitted himself with perfect propriety to Feversham, and directed his wrath solely upon the enemy.[1]

It is not our purpose to follow this strange small campaign in detail. Churchill, once in contact with the rebels, never let go. His well-trained force of regular cavalry, widely spread, enveloped and stabbed the flanks and rear of Monmouth's army. He followed them wherever they moved, changing from one flank to the other as occasion served, and always labouring to impress upon the enemy, and especially upon Monmouth, whose temperament he knew well, that they were aggressively opposed by the loyal regular forces of the Crown. At the same time he endeavoured to keep the militia out of danger, to have them concentrated and as far from the enemy as possible at points where he could, with his professional troops, ensure alike not only their lives but their fidelity.

Meanwhile such parts of the regular forces as could be spared from an agitated capital were approaching. Kirke, newly landed from Tangier, with his companies of the Queen's Regiment, joined Churchill at Chard on June 21. They had accomplished 140 miles in eight days—a fine feat for infantry, even with some help from horses. With this reinforcement Churchill revolved the chances of a decisive action. He wrote on June 21 to the Duke of Somerset, "I have forces enough not to apprehend [fear] the Duke of Monmouth, but on the contrary should be glad to meet with him and my men are in so good heart."[2] The quality and temper of the militia was, however, prohibitive; they were prone to join the rebels rather than fight them—in fact, they went over by whole companies. Churchill did not in this event feel strong enough to bar the way to Bristol, as was desired at Whitehall. No course was open to him but to await the arrival of the royal army, and meanwhile claw the enemy.

Monmouth's only chance was swiftness and audacity; without a wide, popular uprising he was doomed. The elements existed which might make him a King, but these elements were political rather than military. He must seize towns and cities and gain their arms and supplies before the royal troops arrived in strength. Bristol, the second city in the kingdom, was full of his partisans. Here was

[1] He was promoted Major-General on July 3, possibly to soften his supersession by Feversham; but he knew nothing of this till after the battle.

[2] Northumberland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 98.

his first obvious objective. To gain the mastery of Bristol would be a formidable advantage. The distance from Lyme to Bristol is about seventy miles, and every risk should have been run to arrive there at the earliest moment. He had, of course, to organize his forces, and must spend some precious days in drilling his recruits. Moreover, most of his transport was drawn by oxen. He was received at Bridgwater with all the enthusiasm of Taunton. He was harried on his marches by Churchill, and hampered by want of trustworthy cavalry to drive him off. It was not until June 25, a fortnight after his landing, that, with forces now swollen to eight thousand foot and a thousand horse, he stood before the decayed ramparts of Bristol. He was too late. Feversham had entered the city on the 23rd with two hundred horse. The Duke of Beaufort held the hill where the castle had formerly stood, and thence intimidated the population. The royal army was already near Bath, and Churchill lay upon Monmouth's other flank. In these circumstances, only some of which were known to him, he abandoned his design; and with his turning back from Bristol his adventure became forlorn.

Churchill followed close at his heels, cutting off stragglers, hunting his patrols, and looking for a chance to strike. We must not omit to mention, since Wolseley is reproached with suppressing it, that on Friday, the 26th, a mile beyond the town of Pensford, Churchill halted his troops and hanged one "Jarvis the feltmaker," a prisoner who had been taken two days before; and that Jarvis died "obstinately and impenitently."

That same evening Churchill joined Feversham at Bath, where his brother, Charles Churchill, had also arrived, having escorted a train of artillery from Portsmouth. The next day Feversham advanced with the bulk of his forces to attack the rebels at Norton St Philip. The affair was ill-conducted. Five hundred of the royal foot, with some cavalry under the Duke of Grafton, involved themselves in a narrow lane, the hedgerows of which were lined by Monmouth's musketeers. These two by-blows of Charles II—bastard versus bastard—were locked in semi-fratricidal strife. Feversham and Churchill both arrived on the scene. The rebels fought stoutly, and the royal forces, drawing off with a loss of eighty men killed, retired to Bradford in some dissatisfaction. In spite of this incident, Monmouth's army began to melt. Two thousand men deserted. A convoy of arms and stores which was sorely needed was captured near Frome. Taunton, lately so ardent, sent a deputation to beseech him not to return to their town. Upon all this came

the tidings that Argyll's revolt had been extinguished and that he and Rumbold had already been beheaded. Despondency and fear began to overspread not only Monmouth's troops, but all those friendly districts which had compromised themselves in his cause. Nowhere did they weigh more heavily than in his own heart.

On July 3 Monmouth in the deepest gloom re-entered Bridgwater, which he had left eleven days before. Not one man of note had joined him. His peasant army, officered by tradesmen, was wearied and perplexed by ceaseless marches and counter-marches in mud and rain, evidently to no purpose. But those fires still smouldered in their hearts which success would have fanned into flame and which in many only death could quench. On the 5th Feversham, with Churchill and all the royal forces in one body, came from Somerton and camped at Weston Zoyland. The energy of the campaign had sensibly relaxed since the new general had assumed command. Oppressed by the weather and only now provided with tents, he was content to leave the initiative to the rebels and settled himself in a good position facing the plain of Sedgemoor. A ditch, boggy in places, known locally as the Bussex Rhine, passable by cavalry only at two passages, or 'plungeons,' ran across his front and seemed to excuse him from the labour of entrenching. His cavalry billeted themselves in the village of Weston, on the right of his line; his artillery was on the opposite flank, a quarter of a mile farther off. The militia were left out of harm's way a good many miles behind. Not counting these auxiliaries, he mustered seven hundred horse, including the Household Cavalry and six battalions of infantry—in all, nearly three thousand regular troops with sixteen guns.

The two small armies were now scarcely three miles apart, and Monmouth must choose his course without delay. Should he assault the royal position? Should he defend himself in Bridgwater? Should he march once again northward on the Bristol road towards Gloucestershire, Cheshire, and the adherents who were believed to be assembling there? To attack the regulars in the open field was to court destruction. To be shut up in Bridgwater was only to postpone it. But the roads to the north were still open. He could certainly march past Feversham's right and cross the Avon at Keynsham before him. Though pursued, he would advance into a friendly region and a new scene. He chose the last alternative, and during the 4th and 5th disposed and prepared his forces with that intention. To deceive the enemy he employed the inhabitants of Bridgwater ostentatiously upon the fortification of the town, and also issued

orders for a retreat upon Taunton. Churchill, who digested every scrap of information, wrote on the 4th to Clarendon:

> I find by the enemy's warrant to the constables that they have more mind to get horses and saddles than anything else which looks as if he had a mind to break away with his horse to some other place and leave his foot entrenched at Bridgwater.

Monmouth, in fact, meant to march with all his force—at least, at the outset. But when, on the morning of the 5th, he quitted Bridgwater and was crossing the town bridge to join his men in the Castle Field, a local farm labourer[1] met him with intimate news of the royal army. It lay scattered in negligent fashion without entrenchment. The last night at Somerton no proper guards had been set; and it was said that laxity, drunkenness, and roystering prevailed. From the tower of Bridgwater Church the whole camp could be seen. Monmouth returned to the town, climbed the tower, saw for the first time the loosely spread camp, and took alike the most daring and the most prudent decision of his life—a night attack!

He called a council, and his supporters agreed. The farm labourer Godfrey, sent to make sure there were no entrenchments, confirmed his first report and undertook to guide the rebel column across the ground he knew well. The afternoon was spent in preparations and in prayer. Ferguson and the other preachers harangued the fanatical, homely bands. The plan was less simple than plans of war by night should be. The whole force would make a march of about six miles round Feversham's right. Grey's cavalry would branch off and, avoiding Chedzoy village, cross the Bussex Rhine at one of the plungeons to the east of the royal camp, surprise the Dragoons and Blues in Weston Zoyland, fire the village, and sweep round the rear upon the camp, the artillery, and the baggage at the same time that the infantry broke into the front of the position. It was a desperate cast; but Monmouth had about 3500 brave, determined men. In the night all cats are grey; and the confusion of a hand-to-hand grapple, with all its hopes of surprise and panic, was the best chance left. Indeed, it was a good chance; and but for this, that, and the other, no one knows what might have come of it. Accordingly, a little after eleven o'clock the rebels set forth along the Keynsham

[1] He was not, as usually stated, a farmer, but a servant of a Mr Sparks, who lived in Chedzoy. Sparks had climbed the Chedzoy church tower in the morning and had watched the royal army encamping. To avoid compromising himself, he sent his man, who knew the country well, to tell the Duke what he had seen.

road, and after shuffling along for about two miles wheeled to the right into the mist of the moor.[1]

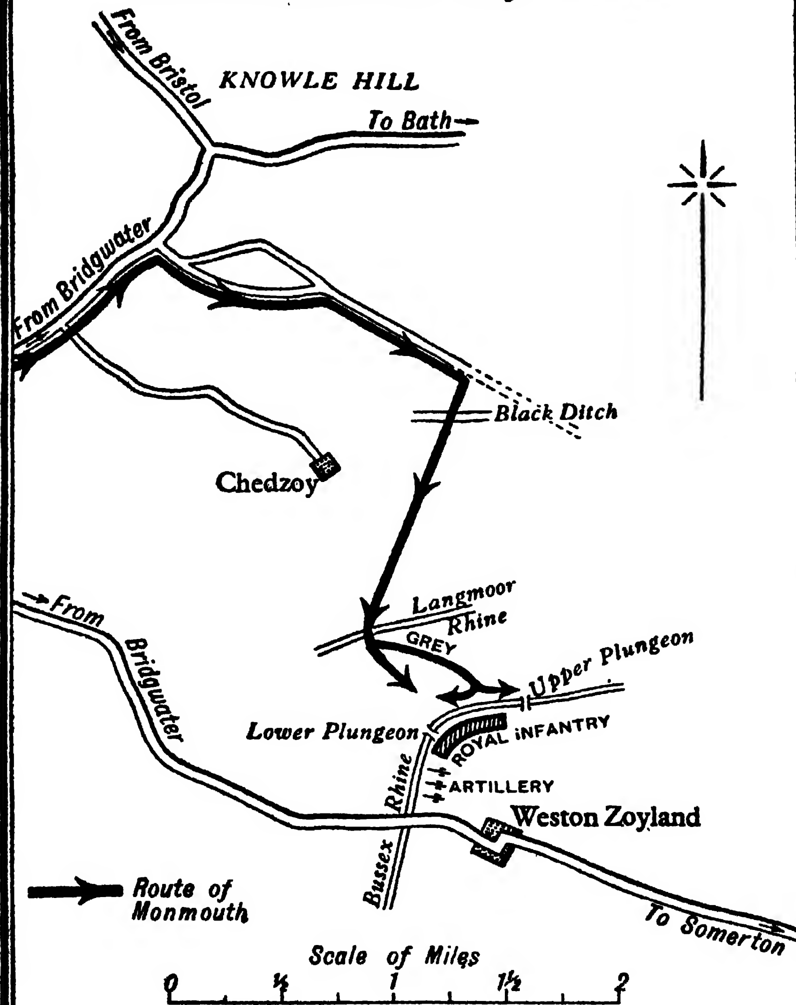
Serious charges have been levelled at Feversham by many historians. Burnet declares that Feversham "had no parties abroad, . . . got no intelligence, . . . and was abed without any care or order." It is certain he was asleep in bed when the musketry fire exploded all around. We have contemporary accounts of his heavy meals and lethargic habits. Although Churchill preserved his customary impeccable politeness, the royal officers spoke of their commander with contempt, mocking at his broken English and declaring that he only thought of eating and sleeping. Seven years before he had survived the operation, grievous in those days, of being trepanned after terrible injuries sustained in trying to limit the fire in Temple Lane by blowing up the houses. One record depicts him in the midst of the alarm methodically tying his cravat before the looking-glass of the farm in which he sheltered. In fact, however, though he omitted to post a guard on the plungeon beyond his right flank, he had not fallen far short of ordinary military routine. He had camped in a good position; he had posted at least five strong pickets of horse and one of foot on the approaches from the enemy; he had an inlying picket of a hundred men under arms, and he had sent Oglethorpe's troop of the Blues to patrol both of the roads from Bridgwater to the north, whither he, like Churchill, expected Monmouth to attempt escape. He visited his outposts in person and waited for some time for Oglethorpe's report. He went to bed just before one, after receiving a message from Oglethorpe that all was quiet. Though praised and rewarded at the time, Oglethorpe has also been blamed by the critics, especially by Lord Wolseley, the most competent of all. He proceeded with his troop for some distance upon the Bridgwater road, waited a long time on a hill close to the junction of the Bristol and Bath roads, and, finding nothing in the mysterious night, pushed on to the outskirts of the town. Here he learned that the rebel army had departed. Whither he could not tell!

Meanwhile Monmouth and his men plodded onward across the moor, with Grey, guided by Godfrey, in the van. The Black Ditch, one of the great drainage ditches called 'rhines,' had been success-

[1] Much the best account of Sedgemoor is written by Mr Maurice Page (Bridgwater Booklets, No. 4), who by minute searching of parish registers and local inquiries has corrected in numerous minor particulars the hitherto accepted versions; and who quotes for the first time the evidence of the Rector of Chedzoy and Mr Paschall.

fully crossed. Grey, with his scraggy cavalry and part of the rebel foot, were already over the second (the Langmore Rhine), and the clock of Chedzoy Church had struck one, when suddenly a vedette of the Blues fired a pistol in alarm. Frantic excitement broke out. The assailants were now very near their still sleeping foes. Contrary to most accounts, the rebels knew about the Bussex Rhine, and Grey and his horsemen, improvidently leaving Godfrey behind, rode forward, looking for the plungeon. He struck the ditch at an impassable point. Instead of working to the left in harmony with his mission to turn the flank and rear, he swerved to his right with most of his men and rode along the edge across the front of Monmouth's infantry, whose rear was still scrambling across the Langmore Rhine in the darkness behind him. Meanwhile the royal trumpets sounded, the alarm was given, the drums beat, and the threatened camp sprang in an instant into fury and confusion. The startled Grey saw through the mist a small array of gleaming lights, and moved towards them. Some say he thought they were the lights of Weston. There was a different explanation. It had not yet been possible to rearm Dumbarton's regiment with flintlocks. The lights were their slow matches burning as the troops stood to arms. "Who are you for?" cried a voice from among the matchlocks. "The King." "Which King?" "King Monmouth, God with him!" "Take that with you!" was the rejoinder, and a volley, followed at brief intervals by a second and a third as each platoon accomplished its ritual, crashed across the ditch. Grey or his untrained horses, or both, were stampeded, and scurried in complete disorder round the flanks of the infantry whom Monmouth was now leading up at the double, still in column of march. But the rest of the rebel cavalry had found the plungeon, and were only stopped at the last minute by Compton and a handful of the Blues from crossing by it.

Churchill, like Feversham, had had a long day, but he was awake, armed, equipped, and on the spot. In the absence of his chief he instantly took command. The rebels, who halted to deploy about eighty yards short of the rhine, began to fire wildly across it, while the royal regiments were rapidly forming. The danger of their bursting into the camp had been averted; but they outflanked the royal right, and when their three cannon, under a competent Dutch gunner, began to fire at a hundred yards into the masses of Dumbarton's regiment and the 1st Guards, men fell fast. Churchill therefore rearranged the infantry. He made the two left-hand


SEDGEMOOR, July 5, 1685
From Bristol
KNOWLE HILL
To Bath
From Bridgwater
Black Ditch
Chedzoy
Langmoor Rhine
GREY
Upper Plungeon
Lower Plungeon
ROYAL INFANTRY
ARTILLERY
Weston Zoyland
From Bridgwater
Bussex Rhine
To Somerton
Route of Monmouth
Scale of Miles
0
½
1
1½
2

battalions march behind the others to prolong his front to the right, and summoned the artillery. These were very slow; but the Bishop of Winchester, 'Old Patch,' who accompanied Feversham as spiritual guide, took the horses out of his coach, and by these six guns were dragged successively to the critical point. Feversham now appeared upon the scene. He approved Churchill's arrangements. He gave the extremely sensible order that the infantry were not to attempt to advance across the ditch till daylight, and rode to the left of his line.

Churchill felt the injury Monmouth's artillery was working at such close quarters upon the infantry. It was probably by his orders that Captain Littleton, of the Blues, who were spread about the front, passed the plungeon, formed up on the other side, and just as the sky was paling with the first light of dawn charged and captured the rebel guns. He did not, as is usually stated, lead the charge of this small body himself. Some footsoldiers from the nearest battalion waded across and held what the cavalry had gained.

The firing had now lasted nearly three hours without the two sides being able to come to grips, and, according to Wolseley, the rebel ammunition was running short. Certainly their wagons with the reserve of powder and ball, left two miles behind, had been deserted by the teamsters in the panic of Grey's horse. Day was breaking, and the royal artillery had at length arrived. Drear and doom-like was the dawn to Monmouth. He knew, as an officer experienced in Continental warfare, that his chance had failed and nothing could now save his little army. It is amazing he did not resolve to die on the field with all these earnest simples he had drawn to their fate. But had he been capable of that, he would have been capable of so much more that all our tales would be different. Just as the full light grew upon the plain he, with Grey, who had now rejoined him after his excursion, and about fifty horsemen, rode from the field, hoping to reach a port and seize a ship. On the rising ground beyond the moor these fugitives and deserters drew rein. There, still on the edge of the fatal ditch, stood the stubborn remnants of the Nonconformist foot. The royal cavalry enveloped them or pursued their routed comrades. Feversham's infantry, who were able to cross the ditch everywhere without apparent difficulty, advanced upon them at the charge; but the valiant peasantry, miners, and weavers, small, devout folk serving the Lord in humble station, with the butts of their muskets and their scythes met the regulars breast to breast, and closed their ranks with invincible behaviour. At last the cannon came into action upon this lump of men. All

the sixteen guns had to fire for a considerable time before it was torn to shreds and the scattered survivors fled, the prey to a merciless pursuit. Of this tragedy Monmouth had but one fleeting glance. He only knew that his followers were still resisting when he quitted the field.

We must not be drawn too far from our particular theme. Enough that the charming, handsome prince was caught—drenched and starving—in a ditch; that, carried to London, he grovelled in vain for life at the knees of his implacable uncle; that he repudiated the cause for which he had fought; that he offered to turn Catholic to save not his soul, but his life; and that finally, when these discordant sounds were ended, he died with perfect composure at the hands of a clumsy and demoralized executioner. The Lady Wentworth followed him a few months later, her heart being broken. Death can be kind.

By noon on the 6th Churchill was in Bridgwater with a thousand soldiers. Unhappy town, with its rank offences, its wounded, its mobs of prisoners or fugitives, its terrified inhabitants! Feversham followed more slowly. He had the Continental view of war. To him these English peasants and common folk were but an unsuccessful Jacquerie. He had to festoon the trees with hanged men. With him was Kirke, who had the Tangier outlook, and whose soldiers, newly returned from the crusade against the Moors, bore the emblem of the Paschal Lamb. He and his Lambs showed no mercy except for cash. Worse still was to come.

It is pleasant to find that the foremost man in the fighting had no part in the aftermath of atrocities. Churchill seems to have disentangled himself from the tortured West Country with astonishing deftness. We think he hastened with the utmost speed to Sarah. There is a letter which he had written on June 30 to her at Holywell.

> I have received your picture which you sent by my Lord Colchester. I do assure you that it was very welcome to me, and will be when I am alone a great satisfaction to me, for the whole world put together I do not love so well as I do you, for I sweare to you I had much rather lose my own life than lose you. Therefore for my sake I recommend to you to have a care of yourself. We have had abundance of rain, which has very much tired our soldiers, which I think is ill, because it makes us not press the Duke of Monmouth so much as I think he should be, and that it will make me the longer from you, for I suppose until he be routed, I shall not have the happiness of being with you, which is most earnestly desired by me.

The rout having now been accomplished, he returned home.

The royal rewards for the victory went mainly to Feversham; he received the Garter and the command of the first and most lucrative troop of the Life Guards, while Churchill had to content himself with the command of the third troop of that regiment. But nothing could free the public mind from the impression that it was Churchill who had saved and won the battle. The whole Army knew the facts. The officers included the Household troops, the Guards, and all the most fashionable soldiers about the Court. They said what they thought. Feversham's martial achievements became a laughing-stock, and the Duke of Buckingham wrote a farce about the general who gained a battle by lying in bed.[1] No doubt there was a strong prejudice against Feversham as a Frenchman; and it may well be, as many writers now contend, that he deserved more credit than he got from his contemporaries. The impression that this slothful foreigner was slumbering on his couch and that the vigilant Englishman saved the situation had more truth in it than the popular version of many historical events.

We must suppose in our attempt to revive from these fragments of history the personality of John Churchill that his treatment by James during and after the Sedgemoor campaign crystallized their private relations. John's sagacious eye weighed with precision his claims upon the royal favour. He must also have comprehended the King's point of view as fairly as he would have measured the virtues and weaknesses of any other adversary, once classed as such. But, apart from his own course and career, there were some matters which stirred his depths. To the butcheries of the Sedgemoor battlefield succeeded the horrors of the Bloody Assize. The Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, quick to catch his master's mood and spurred by his own sadistic passions, wreaked vengeance upon Bridgwater, Taunton, and the guilty countryside. Nearly four hundred executions marked his progress. Twelve hundred rebels were sold as slaves for the Barbados plantations. To this day in Barbados there exists a colony of white men who, though they have not inter-

[1] *The Battle of Sedgemoor*, Buckingham's *Works* (ed. 1775), ii, 117–124. Among other absurdities Feversham is made to say, "A pox take de Towna vid de hard Name: How you call de Towna, De Breeche? . . . Ay begarra, Breechwater; so Madama we have intelegenta dat de Rebel go to Breechwater; me say to my Mena, March you Rogua; so we marsha de greata Fielda, begar, de brava Contra where dey killa de Hare vid de Hawka, begar, de brav Sport in de Varld." The jargon shows the kind of prejudice felt by English society and the Army against foreigners, and the atmosphere around Feversham.

married with the negroes, toil as equals at their side. They are called the 'red-legs.' They have lost all track of their origin or family trees. Their names have perished; and few there are who know that they include the rearguard of Monmouth's army, lagging a couple of centuries behind.

A squalid traffic in slaves and pardons became fashionable at Whitehall during the Bloody Assize. "Who has not heard," exclaims Ranke, "of the maids of Taunton?" These schoolgirls, marshalled by their teachers, had presented Monmouth with his embroidered banner. Their well-to-do families were forced to ransom their lives. It was very profitable for a courtier or a Lady of the Bedchamber to have a maid or two allotted to them.[1] This marketing of slaves became both an open scandal and a cause of broil. The Court felt that this booty was their due. The Lord Chief Justice resented such an inroad upon his perquisites, and while he sold pardons and mitigations almost at auction, he soon made it clear by some bloody examples upon those who sued for clemency through irregular channels that he regarded the intercessions of Whitehall as intrusions upon the sacred preserves of the Judiciary. He affirmed a principle. The law, he felt, must in such matters be independent of the Executive. The whole episode was a cannibal outburst over which King James presided with spiritual exaltation.

We have a glimpse of John Churchill—and of his feelings towards his master—in these times. There was the case of two youthful Baptists, the Hewlings.

> Their sister, Hannah Hewling, presented a petition to the King in behalf of her brothers and was introduced for the purpose by Lord Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough. While they waited in

[1] Macaulay here fell comically into a ditch, and entirely through indulging those literary vices to which he was addicted. For one reason or another he had taken a dislike to William Penn, the Quaker leader. He treated him exactly as he treated Marlborough. By various deft turns he managed in his history to set him in an unpleasing light. He mentions, for instance, that he had attended two executions in a single day, one a hanging at Newgate and another a burning at Tyburn, and suggested that he had a taste for such spectacles; the fact being that Penn had solemnly promised both the victims to abide with them in their dying moments. The story of the Maids of Taunton seemed to furnish another opportunity for completing the portrait of William Penn in dark colours. A certain Penne had been forward in the dealings about their ransom. Macaulay lighted upon the name with glee. He speedily convinced himself it was William Penn, and wrote a scathing paragraph of history upon the shameful fact. Unluckily for 'history,' however, it was a Penne—no connexion—whose Christian name was George who undoubtedly did the dirty work. The essay in which Paget exposes this blunder (which Macaulay tried to brazen out) is in itself a fitting punishment.

> the antechamber for admittance, standing near the mantlepiece, Lord Churchill assured her of his most hearty wishes of success to her petition, "but, madam," said he, "I dare not flatter you with any such hopes, for that marble is as capable of feeling compassion as the King's heart."[1]

The result justified this severe opinion. Both the Hewlings were hanged.

[1] W. Orme, *Remarkable Passages in the Life of William Kiffin*, p. 147.

Chapter Thirteen

THE ROYAL PLOT

1685–1687

THE swift destruction of Monmouth and Argyll, the vengeance wreaked upon their adherents, the loyalty of Parliament and the fighting forces, combined to give the King a sense of sure and overwhelming power. He began forthwith to move forward along the path of his heart's desire. He would make England a Catholic country and himself an absolute monarch. The steps which he must take to these ends would, he knew, be many and hard. Only gradually and patiently could such great designs be accomplished; but he need no longer observe that caution or practise those deceits which had induced his accession promises. He had marched victorious through the ordeal of a double rebellion; he had proved by terrible examples his strength and his wrath. Who would now dare resist his sovereign will? No more for him the shifts and subterfuges to which his weak, indolent brother had been forced. Henceforward he would have Ministers who would be agents rather than counsellors; he would have compliant Parliaments or none at all; he would have judges who would set the royal authority above the law; he would have a strong, disciplined army devoted to his person; above all, he would suffer no longer that the true faith, which he himself embraced so dearly, should lie under the ban of penal laws. To free his Catholic subjects from their oppression and to raise them to offices of power and honour became for him a sacred duty.

As soon as Jeffreys' "campaign," as James called it, was ended he proposed to his Council the repeal of the Test Act and the Habeas Corpus Act, those two hated relics of Whig insurgency in the late reign. The measures taken to suppress the rebellion and the money supplied for that purpose by Parliament furnished him with a large increase in his Army. Eight new regiments of cavalry and twelve of infantry were formed. The whole Tangier garrison was now at home. In the emergency many Catholics had been given commissions and commands. The King was determined to retain

them, and to use them and other Catholic officers in the raising of the new regiments. He wished to see the Catholic peers resume their functions in the House of Lords. Halifax, as Lord President of the Council, resisted these departures and cited the statutes which they violated. Lord Keeper North warned his master against such courses. "Although the Duke of Monmouth was gone, yet there was a Prince of Orange on the other side of the water."[1] Halifax was removed not only from the Presidency of the Council, but from his other offices and from the Privy Council altogether; and when soon North died, Chief Justice Jeffreys, furious champion of the royal prerogative, fresh from the Bloody Assize, became Lord Chancellor in his stead. Sunderland later in the year added the vacant office of Lord President to that of Secretary of State, and became henceforward James's chief Minister.

Parliament met for its second session on November 9, and the King laid his immediate purpose before the Members. The lessons of the late rebellions showed, he declared with admitted reason, the uselessness of the militia. A strong standing army was indispensable to the peace and order of the realm, and Catholic officers were needed to maintain its efficiency. He had appointed such officers during the troubles; he would not dismiss them on the morrow of their faithful services. These two demands shook that friendly Parliament to its foundations. It was deeply and predominantly imbued with the Cavalier spirit. Its most hideous nightmare was a standing army; its dearest treasure the Established Church. Parliament was thus assaulted in both its secular and religious functions. Fear and perplexity disturbed all Members, and beneath their agitation anger smouldered.

Yet no one could accuse either House of turbulence or precipitancy. The old loyalties, revived by recent dangers, still inspired the Tory nobles and country gentlemen. They disputed the failure of the militia, but they offered nevertheless £700,000 for the increase of the Army. Sir Winston in one of his last public appearances made a hearty appeal for such a grant. The House of Commons was even disposed to condone the breach of the Test Act committed by the Catholic officers and to remit their penalties. With profuse expressions of devotion, they asked only for reassurance that Acts of Parliament would not be permanently set aside by the prerogative, and for kind words about the security of their religion. The King answered their address sternly, and the Commons proceeded to

[1] R. North, *Lives of the Norths*, ii, 154.

consider the royal speech in detail. But even now when John Cooke, Treasurer of the Queen Dowager's household, a man known for his loyalty, exclaimed, "We are all Englishmen and are not to be frighted out of our duty by a few high words," they clapped him in the Tower for his impropriety.

It was, indeed, the Upper House that renewed the solemn argument. They too sought to reopen debate on the King's speech, and here Devonshire, the hardy Whig; Halifax, the renowned ex-Minister; Bridgwater and Nottingham, actually members of the Privy Council; and, above all, Henry Compton, Bishop of London, asserted the rights of the nation. A day was fixed for the rediscussion of the Address, and the judges were invited to pronounce upon the lawfulness of the King's proceedings. James had not yet packed the Bench with his partisans. He saw plainly that the declaration which must now be expected from the judges and the House of Lords would constitute a massive obstacle to that very dispensing power upon which he intended to rely for the relief and preferment of the Catholics. He therefore, on November 20, suddenly appeared in the House of Lords, summoned the Commons to the Bar, and prorogued Parliament. It never met again while he was King.

Since Sedgemoor Churchill had watched impassively the King's proceedings. His position in the royal household precluded him from taking part in the debates of the Upper House, in which he was but a newcomer. When the Duke of Albemarle had refused to serve under the discredited Feversham in the Army, Churchill had taken the vacant post. It was not until the trial of Lord Delamere in January 1686 for complicity in Monmouth's rebellion that he was compelled to set himself publicly in opposition to his master and benefactor. The King named Judge Jeffreys Lord High Steward, and Jeffreys appointed thirty peers as Triers. "All the thirty," writes Macaulay,[1]

> were in politics vehemently opposed to the prisoner. Fifteen of them were colonels of regiments, and might be removed from their lucrative commands at the pleasure of the King. . . . Every Trier, beginning from the lowest, had to rise separately and to give in his verdict, on his honour, before a great concourse. That verdict, accompanied by his name, would go to every part of the world, and would live in history.

Jeffreys, of course, acted like a prosecuting attorney rather than a judge. The chief witness for the Crown was a professional informer;

[1] *History*, ii, 38.

but Delamere was certainly a dangerous Whig. The King took his seat in the House of Lords and glowered upon the scene. The Triers withdrew and consulted together for about half an hour. It fell to Churchill, as junior Baron among them, to speak first. He stood up, uncovered, and laying his hand upon his breast, answered, "Not guilty, upon my honour!"[1] The whole thirty peers followed him in acquittal. The King did not conceal his annoyance. The failure of the Crown to convict Delamere and the public relief which followed was the end of the vengeance for Monmouth's rebellion.

Freeing himself from Parliamentary opposition by repeated prorogations, King James proceeded throughout 1686 with the relief of his fellow-religionists. First he desired to dispense with the Test against Catholics in the Army. He consulted his judges on the means of achieving this. "Can I," he asked Judge Jones, who had accompanied Jeffreys on his campaign after Sedgemoor, "find twelve judges who will uphold my power to dispense with the laws?" "Your Majesty may find twelve judges to your mind, but hardly twelve lawyers." However, after various dismissals and appointments the Bench was packed, and a test case (the Colonel Hales case) arranged. The dispensing power was upheld by the court. Armed with this, James in May granted a dispensation to the curate of Putney, although he had become a Catholic, to continue in his benefice. At the same time Roman Catholic peers were admitted into the Privy Council. In January 1686 he set up an Ecclesiastical Commission, an instrument declared illegal by the Long Parliament, whose main function was to prevent Anglicans from preaching against Catholics. Bishop Compton had already been dismissed from the Privy Council. He was now suspended from his functions as Bishop of London.

By the end of the year James had driven away many of his most faithful friends and disquieted everybody. Halifax, who had saved him from the Exclusion Bill, was brooding in the country. Danby, only liberated from the Tower in 1684, had perforce abandoned his dream of Church and King. He saw it could never be realized with a Papist sovereign. Albemarle, son of the General Monk who had made the Restoration, had quitted the royal service in dudgeon. Bishop Compton, whose father, the Earl of Northampton, had fallen in the Civil War, who had himself been an officer of the Life Guards, was in strident opposition. The loyal Parliament which had

[1] *State Trials*, ii, 593.

rallied to James against Monmouth and Argyll could be brought together no more without the certainty of quarrel. Its lords and squires sat sullen and anxious in their homes amid their tenantry. The Church, the bulwark of Legitimacy, seethed with suppressed alarms, and only the powerful influence of Rochester upon the bishops and clergy prevented a vehement outburst. Soon the two Hydes, both Rochester and Clarendon, were to be chased from the King's side.

In those days the King was the actual head of the executive Government; he chose his own Ministers and settled his own policy. There was no recognized right of opposition to the Government. James had now made it clear that he would only be advised by Ministers who whole-heartedly accepted his view. If statesmen could not see their way to serve the King as he wished to be served, they had no expectation of ever being called again to public service. Indeed, the distinction was very nice between opposition and treason. What, then, was to be done? It was plain that the King, with all the downright resolution of his nature, was actively and of set purpose subverting the faith and Constitution of the country, contrary to all he had promised and to its inflexible resolve. For a space many endured in silence. The Whigs, though outraged, were in eclipse. The Tories, almost equally distressed, were wrapped up in the Church of England. One of the cardinal doctrines of that Church since the Restoration had been non-resistance to the royal power. With infinite imprudence the King wore away this security.

While, during the whole of 1686 and 1687, James held Parliament in abeyance, and used his dispensing power to introduce Roman Catholics into the various high offices, military and civil, Whigs and Tories drew closer together. The glaring differences which had sundered them in the last reign faded before their growing common peril. James could not fail to see that he was uniting the party that had challenged his brother and the party which had rallied so ardently to his brother's defence. He felt himself in presence of the silent hostility of all those forces which had brought about the Restoration and on which his own throne was based. He now embarked upon a political manœuvre which was at once audacious, crafty, and miscalculated. Hitherto he had striven only to relieve his Catholic subjects. He would now bid for the aid of the Dissenters, who lay equally under the ban of penal laws. He would unite the flanks of politics against the centre, and lead the old Roman Catholic nobility and gentry to make common cause with Puritans and

Roundheads. All those who suffered for their faith through the hard laws demanded by the majority of the nation should band themselves together behind him in the name of religious toleration. The chapels and conventicles should find in him their champion against the Established Church. If Whigs and Tories were combined, he would match them by a coalition of Papists and Nonconformists under the armed power of the Crown. Nay, he would not reject even the dim, stubborn masses who had swarmed to Monmouth's standards in the West, or had awaited him elsewhere, whose faith was the very antithesis of his own, and whose fathers had cut off his father's head. With these at his back, he would teach the Church of England, the Cavaliers, and those froward Whigs their duty. In William Penn, the Quaker courtier, influential in both this and the former reign, he found a powerful skilful agent. Here, then, was the King of England breaking down the natural pillars of his throne and seeking to shore it up with novel, ill-assorted, inadequate props.

This strange departure produced its reaction upon foreign policy. James, although anxious for French money, was by no means disposed to be the vassal of the French King. He admired and wished to imitate the French systems of government both in Church and State, but he was resentful of any slur upon the independence of his realm. During 1685 and 1686 Louis XIV found serious cause for anxiety in the attitude of his royal brother. Although James enthusiastically hailed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he had protested against the persecution loosed upon the small principality of Orange, from which William had sprung. The prompt and loyal, if interested, assistance which William had rendered during Monmouth's rebellion had created a friendly feeling between the English and Dutch Courts. A cordial correspondence was maintained between James and his son-in-law. Now that he was relying upon the Nonconformists at home James was inclined to unite himself, for his supreme purpose of making England Catholic, with the champion of the Protestant faith abroad. William Penn was sent to Holland to help persuade the Prince of Orange to agree to a plan whereby England would support the Dutch against the French, if William of Orange would help James in carrying a Declaration of Indulgence for English Catholics and Dissenters.

These were the politics of paradox. They broke upon the rock of William's far-sighted self-interest. His connexions with England were strengthened and multiplied every day. His chest was filled

with complaining letters from Whig and Tory magnates. He knew what an improvident exchange James was making in driving away the old traditional friends of the English monarchy, and seeking in their stead to found himself upon elements saturated with a conception of limited monarchy then deemed republicanism. He would not try to build upon a threatened authority. Vital to the Protestant cause as was the alliance with England, William would not seek it through such doubtful agency. He looked behind the gimcrack politics of the King to the rising anger of the nation, and kept the path clear for his own ambitions. He therefore declined to support or approve the Declaration of Indulgence.

William was already in close touch with Halifax. The Great Trimmer felt intensely the new list of the ship, and leaned all the weight of his sagacity and influence to counter it. "I do not find the measures now taken," he wrote in a letter of July 20, 1686,

> are such as would encourage a man to be a gamester, after he hath been turned out for a Wrangler; except one could divest oneself of those foolish things called principles, which I find the meaner sort of man uses like their clothes and make them willing to the fashion whatever it is; which is a pitch of understanding I am not yet come up to, and consequently am too dull to meddle with so nimble a trade as those whose politics grow of late in the world [a reference to Sunderland]. I am too slow a beast to keep pace with them now that they are upon the gallop. The four new Privy Councillors [all Catholics], the Commission of Supremacy [the Ecclesiastical Commission] and several other things set up included in them give a pretty fair prospect of what is reasonable to be expected.[1]

Thus Halifax!

In January 1687 came the fall of the Hydes. For a long time both had been unhappy in their offices. Clarendon in Ireland had been overawed by Tyrconnel; Rochester at Whitehall by Sunderland. In June 1686 Rochester had tried to wean James back to moderation through the influence of Catharine Sedley, the Duke of York's Protestant mistress in former days. For a space Catharine's influence seemed strong. She was created Countess of Dorchester. But the exertions of the King's confessor, and the just indignation of the Queen, soon recalled James to orthodox faith and marital propriety. Rochester bore the blame alike of the intrigue and of its failure. The reader will remember Hyde's attempts in 1681 to persuade James to conform to Protestantism. Now the rôles and objects

[1] Foxcroft, *Halifax*, i, 466.

were reversed. From October 1686 onwards James had been trying to convert his younger brother-in-law to the Roman faith. Rochester was very fond of office and made much money out of it. But at length he realized that the alternative before him was to quit the Treasurership or become a Catholic. Forthwith he set himself to make his case before the Anglican Church, so that all could see a public ground of quarrel. He consented to hear priestly arguments for his conversion to Rome, and after duly considering them announced that he was only the more confirmed in the Protestant faith. Indeed, he had been for some time so perturbed by the danger to Protestantism in Europe that, High Churchman as he was, he thought, like Halifax, that all the Protestant sects should now draw together for common defence.

Sunderland had expressed to the King his fears that Rochester would let himself be converted in order to cling to his office. The King knew better: but in the upshot he was no less vexed at Rochester's obduracy as a Protestant than pleased at getting rid of him as a Minister. On January 7, 1687, Rochester was dismissed from the Treasury, and three days later Clarendon in Ireland was replaced by Tyrconnel. The friend of the Hydes, Queensberry, had already been recalled from his Commissionership in Scotland, and was superseded by two Catholics, Perth and Melfort, of whom more later. These changes marked another definite stage in the reign of James II. The prorogation of Parliament at the end of 1685 had been the beginning of Cavalier and Anglican discontent against the Crown. With the dismissal of Rochester began the revolutionary conspiracy.

Meanwhile James was raising and preparing his army. Charles II's forces of about seven thousand men had cost £280,000 a year. Already James was spending £600,000 upon the upkeep of more than twenty thousand men. Three troops of Life Guards,[1] the Blues, ten regiments of horse or dragoons, two of foot-guards, and fifteen of the line, besides garrison troops, were under arms by February 1686. Every summer a great camp was formed at Hounslow to impress the Londoners. In August 1685 this contained about ten thousand men. A year later Feversham could assemble fifteen thousand men and twenty-eight guns. The King went often to the camp, seeking to make himself popular with the officers and all ranks. He had Mass celebrated in a wooden chapel borne on wheels and placed in the centre of the camp between the horse and foot. He watched the drill of the troops and dined with Feversham, Churchill, and other

[1] Each equal almost to a regiment.

generals. He continued his infusion of Catholic officers and Irish recruits. He had a parson, Johnson, pilloried and whipped from Newgate to Tyburn for a seditious pamphlet addressed to Protestant soldiers. He comforted himself with the aspect of this formidable army, the like of which had not been seen since Cromwell, and against which nothing could be matched in England. He increasingly promoted Catholics to key posts. Arabella's son, the Duke of Berwick, now eighteen years old, was made governor of Portsmouth; and Catholics commanded at both Hull and Dover. At midsummer 1688 a Catholic admiral ruled the Channel Fleet.

Soon after the dismissal of the Hydes William sent over to England a trusted envoy. Dykevelt, a Dutchman of the highest character and standing, arrived in London partly to exhibit the Prince of Orange as pleading with James to moderate his measures, and partly to enter into communication with the Opposition leaders. Dykevelt warned James almost as an ultimatum that neither William nor Mary, should they succeed to the Crown, would maintain any of his Romanizing policy. Even if the Test Act were repealed they would re-enact it, and would reign in association with the Church of England and the Parliamentary system. The King, in his irritation at this interference in his affairs, may have overlooked the fact that the Prince of Orange was at the same time presenting a rival political programme to his subjects. Dykevelt saw all the statesmen opposed to the Court; he received their views and assurances, and at the same time made it clear that they could count upon William and Mary for support in their struggle and protection in their distress.

For some months past the King and the Catholic party had been toying with a plan for declaring Princess Anne next in succession to the Crown, on condition that she would turn Catholic. Such designs, if they were ever seriously intended, or their mere rumour, threw the Cockpit into the most violent internal commotion. Here the Protestant circle had become close and tight. Princess Anne was convulsed with fear and anger at the suggestion that her faith would be tampered with, and roused herself quite sincerely to a mood of martyrdom. Taught and fortified by Bishop Compton, dwelling in intense intimacy with her beloved Sarah, guided through her as well as directly by John Churchill, she now embarked with her husband upon real antagonism to her father.

As early as December 29, 1686, before Dykevelt's arrival, she had written to her sister Mary about her friend Lord Churchill. "I believe," she said, "that he will always obey the King in all things

that are consistent with religion—yet rather than change that, I daresay he will lose all his places and all that he has." In February she sought, no doubt upon the advice of the Churchills, permission to visit her sister at The Hague. Barillon was much concerned at this suggestion, the objections to which he readily perceived. "The Princess Anne has strongly pressed the King to allow her to go, but he has bluntly refused!" On March 14 he reports that Anne

> has been worked up with the plan of going to Holland under the pretext of meeting her sister. Once she was there she would have been prevented from coming back and the Protestant party would have been fortified by the union of these two princesses, the lawful heirs to the Crown, who could have made declarations and protestations against the whole Catholic movement. King James was not without suspicion that Churchill had his share in proposing such a journey and that his wife, the Princess Anne's favourite, had awakened her ambition.[1]

Even Rochester and his wife were suspected of being favourable. "There could be no doubt that Dykevelt had encouraged the Protestant cabals." "The Bishop of Wells had preached against the Government in Anne's presence." And again on April 3: "Princess Anne openly shows her zeal for the Protestant religion and has been *incognita* to various churches to hear popular preachers. The King still hopes to convert her to Catholicism."

A letter of Anne's to her sister Mary reveals her position with startling clarity. Dalrymple has printed it in an abridged and mutilated form from the Carte manuscripts. He omits three interesting passages and misdates it by a year, thereby misleading the whole string of historians who have transcribed him unquestioningly. The Spencer Papers contain a copy which, since it illuminates the position of Anne and the Churchills, deserves to be printed here, for the first time, in its integrity.[2]

YE COCKPIT
March 13th [1687]

This letter going by sure hands I will now venture to write my mind very freely to you, and in the first place must tell you, that the satisfaction I proposed to myself of seeing you this spring has been denied me, which has been no small trouble to me as you may easily imagine: and the disappointment has been the greater because the King gave me leave when I first asked it; for the night I came from Richmond, I desired him to give the Prince leave to go into Denmark, and me to go into Holland, which he granted immediately without any

[1] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 161, f. 172.
[2] The passages omitted by Dalrymple are printed in italics.

difficulty, but in a few days after, he told me I must not go. So that 'tis plain he has spoke of it to some body that persuaded him against it, and 'tis as certain that that body was Lord Sunderland, for the King trusts him with everything; and he going on so fiercely for the interest of the Papists, is afraid you should be told a true character of him and this I really believe is the reason why I was refus'd coming to you, tho' may be, he and the Priests together give other reasons to the King therefore since I am not to see my dear Sister. . . .

You may remember I have once before ventured to tell you, that I thought Lord Sunderland a very ill man, and I am more confirmed every day in that opinion. Everybody knows how often this man turned backwards and forwards in the late King's time; and now, to complete all his virtues, he is working with all his might to bring in Popery. He is perpetually with the priests, and stirs up the King to do things faster than I believe he would of himself. Things are come to that pass now, that, if they go on so much longer, I believe in a little while, no Protestant will be able to live here.

The King has never said a word to me about religion since the time I told you of; but I expect it every minute, and am resolved to undergo anything rather than change my religion. Nay, if it should come to such extremities, I will chuse to live on alms rather than change.

This worthy Lord does not go publicly to mass, but hears it privately at a priest's chamber, and never lets anybody be there, but a servant of his.

His lady too, is as extraordinary in her kind; for she is a flattering, dissembling, false woman; but she has so fawning and endearing a way, that she will deceive any body at first, and it is not possible to find out all her ways in a little time. She cares not at what rate she lives, but never pays any body. She will cheat, though it be for a little. Then she has had her gallants, though may be not so many as some ladies here; and with all these good qualities she is a constant church woman; so that to outward appearance one would take her for a saint, and to hear her talk, you would think she was a very good Protestant; but she is as much one as the other; for it is certain that her Lord does nothing without her.

By what I have said you may judge what good hands the King and Kingdom are in, and what an uneasy thing it is to all good honest people, that they must seem to live civilly with this Lord and his Lady. I had not your letter by Mr Dykevelt till last week, but I have never ventured to speak to him, because I am not used to speak to people about business and this Lord is so much upon the watch that I am afraid of him. So I have desired Lord Churchill (who is one that I can trust, and I am sure is a very honest man and a good Protestant) to speak to Mr Dykevelt for me, to know what it is he has to say to me, and by the next opportunity I will answer it, for one dares not write anything by the post!

One thing there is, which I forgot to tell you, about this noble

Lord [Sunderland] which is, that it is thought, if everything does not go as he would have it, that he will pick a quarrel with the court, and so retire, and by that means it is possible he will think he makes his court to you.[1]

There is one thing about yourself which I cannot help giving my opinion in, which is, that if the King should desire you and the Prince of Orange to come over to make him a visit, I think it would be better (if you can make any handsome excuse) not to do it; for though I dare swear the King could have no thought against either of you, yet since people can say one thing, and do another, one cannot help being afraid; but really if you or the Prince should come, I should be frightened out of my wits for fear any harm should happen to either of you!

Pray don't let any body see this, nor don't speak of it: pray let me desire you not to take notice of what I have said to any body except the Prince of Orange; for 'tis all treason that I have spoke, and the King commanded me not to say [to] any that I once thought of coming into Holland: and I fear if he should know that it was no secret, he would be angry with me, therefore as soon as you have read this, pray burn it; for I would not that anybody but the Prince of Orange and yourself should know what I have said. When I have another opportunity 'tis possible that I may have more to say, but for this time having writ so much already, I hope you will forgive me for saying no more now, but that no tongue can ever express how much my heart is yours.

We can see plainly from this letter the deadly breach which had already opened between Anne and her father. Though she rejects, after raising it, the idea that James would be a party to assassination, she warns her sister of the risks which William would incur by paying a visit to the English Court. She believes Sunderland capable of any villainy. There is no doubt that, with her simple faith and courage, she would have let herself be led to death rather than to Rome. In many humbler homes such fears and resolves now dominated daily life.

At Anne's desire Churchill held his conversation on her behalf with Dykevelt. He is not responsible for her vapourings to her sister, but the letter which he wrote to William eight days after the envoy's departure represented, even at this early date, a final decision. It could not well have been expressed in plainer terms.

The Princess of Denmark having ordered me to discourse with Monsieur Dykevelt, and to let him know her resolutions, so that he might let your highness and the princess her sister know that she was

[1] This prediction should not pass unnoticed as the story unfolds.

resolved, by the assistance of God, to suffer all extremities, even to death itself, rather than be brought to change her religion, I thought it my duty to your highness and the princess royal, by this opportunity of Monsieur Dykevelt, to give you assurances under my own hand, that my places and the King's favour I set at nought, in comparison of being true to my religion. In all things but this the King may command me; and I call God to witness, that even with joy I should expose my life for his service, so sensible am I of his favours. I know the troubling you, sir, with thus much of myself, I being of so little use to your highness, is very impertinent, but I think it may be a great ease to your highness and the princess to be satisfied that the Princess of Denmark is safe in the trusting of me; I being resolved, although I cannot live the life of a saint, if there be ever occasion for it, to show the resolution of a martyr.

Dykevelt received similar assurances from Danby, Nottingham, Halifax, Devonshire, Russell, and others. He saw at the same time that there was no danger of the King spoiling William's chances by mending his ways. He returned to The Hague and told his many tales to William. The future Bishop Burnet, once intimate in the councils of the English Court, was already there, independently confirming Dykevelt's accounts. From this time forward our domestic tension was definitely connected with William of Orange, and he, in fact, became the head of the revolution plot.

Chapter Fourteen

THE NATIONAL COUNTER-PLOT

1687–1688

IN the autumn of 1687 the King made a royal progress in the West of England. Churchill accompanied him. They traversed many of the districts which two years before had been aflame for Monmouth. But the resolve of the King to extend liberty of conscience to the Nonconformists, although it was but a help for his Catholic policy, had raised hopes which for the moment almost effaced the memories of the Bloody Assize. The Catholic King received a passable welcome from the ultra-Protestants whose relations he had lately slaughtered or sold into slavery. 'Liberty of conscience' and the removal of the penal laws were war-cries which drowned even the screams and lamentations of the hideous yesterday. James felt that, with his Army dominated by Irish soldiers and Catholic officers and allied to the Dissenting masses of the Cromwellian tradition, he could afford to brave the wrath of the old, devoted friends of his house, of his line, of his person. Vain hope! Frightful miscalculation! At the best a desperate enterprise! At the least the lists were set for destructive civil war. But was it not his duty, if need be, to tear his realm to pieces for his soul's salvation and the glory of God? Thus this melancholy zealot persevered along the road to his own ruin.

On this same progress in the West the King touched about five thousand people for the King's Evil, and at Winchester was attended in the ceremony by Catholic priests. The anonymous author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* reports at length the conversation between Churchill and the King on this occasion. This book is our only authority, but it is the earliest of all Churchill's biographies and has been accepted by most historians. The colloquy has obviously been embroidered; it was almost certainly not invented.

In the Deanery garden at Winchester before dinner the King asked Churchill what people thought "about the method I have taken of performing the ceremony of touching in their churches." "Why, truly," he replied, "they show very little liking to it; and it

is the general voice of your people that your Majesty is paving the way for the introduction of Popery." "How!" exclaimed the King, in anger. "Have I not given them my royal word, and will they not believe their King? I have given liberty of conscience to others; I was always of the opinion that toleration was necessary for all Christian people, and most certainly I will not be abridged of that liberty myself, nor suffer those of my own religion to be deprived of paying their devotions to God in their own way." "What I spoke, sir," said Churchill, "proceeded purely from my zeal for your Majesty's service, which I prefer above all things next to that of God, and I humbly beseech your Majesty to believe no subject in all your three kingdoms would venture further than I would to purchase your favour and good liking; but I have been bred a Protestant, and intend to live and die in that communion; above nine parts in ten of the whole people are of the same persuasion, and I fear (which excess of duty makes me say) from the genius of the English nation, and their natural aversion to the Roman Catholic worship, some consequences which I dare not so much as name, and which it creates in me a horror to think of." The King listened attentively to what, from anyone else, he would have warmly resented, and then said deliberately, "I tell you, Churchill, I will exercise my own religion in such a manner as I shall think fitting. I will show favour to my Catholic subjects, and be a common father to all my Protestants of what religion soever: but I am to remember that I am King, and to be obeyed by them. As for the consequences, I shall leave them to Providence, and make use of the power God has put in my hands to prevent anything that shall be injurious to my honour, or derogatory to the duty that is owing to me." The King then turned away with a stern look and would speak to Churchill no more that night. "He went to dinner, during which his discourse to the Dean of Winchester, Dr Maggot, who stood next to his chair, was altogether about Passive Obedience. I myself," says the author, "was a stander by and heard it; without knowing the occasion of it at that time, till the Lord Churchill told me what words had happened between the King and him."[1]

The provocations of the royal policy constantly increased. The publication of Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther* offers their poetical justification. In April 1687 the King, dispensing with the law by his prerogative, issued his first Declaration of Indulgence. The spring

[1] *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*, pp. 19–21. The conversation has been changed from reported into direct speech.

saw his attempt to force a Catholic President upon Magdalen College, Oxford, and the expulsion of the Fellows for their resistance. In July James planned the public reception of the Papal nuncio, d'Adda. The Duke of Somerset when commanded to conduct the ceremonial objected on the ground that the recognition of Papal officials had been declared illegal at the Reformation. "I am above the law," said James. "Your Majesty is so," was the reply, "but I am not." He was at once dismissed from all his offices.

The King had, in modern parlance and now familiar style, set up his political platform. The second step was to create a party machine, and the third to secure by its agency a Parliament with a mandate for the repeal of the Tests. The narrow franchise could be manipulated to a very large extent by the Lord-Lieutenants of counties, by the magistrates, and in the towns and cities by the corporations. Upon these, therefore, the royal energies were now directed. The Lord-Lieutenants, including many of the greatest territorial magnates, who refused to help pack a favourable Parliament, were dismissed, and Catholics or faithful nominees of the Court installed in their place. The municipal corporations and the benches of magistrates were drastically remodelled so as to secure the fullest representation, or even the preponderance, of Papists and Dissenters. The Government tried to extort from all candidates a pledge to vote for the King's policy.

These measures implied a complete political and social transformation. The nobility and the country gentlemen were outraged by being either turned out of their local dignities or made to receive representatives of the hitherto depressed classes as colleagues. The quarter-sessions and the municipal corporations were the only forms of local government which the people knew. The Lord-Lieutenants were the visible executive instruments of the royal authority. In every one of these bodies and functions the ferment and irritation of change grew. The process of setting Papists and Dissenters over, or in place of, Anglicans and Cavaliers must rupture and recast the whole social structure of English life. The purpose, character, and scope of these measures were profoundly comprehended in that incredibly rigid society from the proudest, wealthiest nobles down to the mass of the common people in town and village. The simples, like the gentles, feared the Pope, hated the French, and pitied the Huguenot refugees. They too, though voteless, counted. Their superiors could not be insensible to an atmosphere of ardour and goodwill around them. The spirit of the people found its own paths

of influence. Psychic forces do not require the ballot-box. A recent Catholic writer[1] has portrayed the opposition to James as the resistance of the rich and powerful. This is true. It was successful because the rich and powerful championed the causes and prejudices which the masses espoused, but without superior leadership were unable to defend.

The six English and Scots regiments in Dutch pay and service which had been sent over to resist Monmouth had all returned to Holland. James and his Ministers became apprehensive lest this fine body of men should some day pay them another and less friendly visit. For some months in 1687 James and Louis were trying to arrange for the transfer of these regiments from the Dutch service to the French. Churchill seems to have used all his personal influence —such as it then was—with James to prevent their departure from Holland, and to obtain the command of them in Holland for himself. Sunderland told Barillon on November 3, 1687:

> I believe this proposal will be accepted and that it would have been done already had not Lord Churchill taken great trouble for a long time to represent to His Majesty how advantageous it would be to him to have a body of his subjects maintained in Holland. Lord Churchill's aim was to be in command of this force. But he will find himself disappointed as this regiment [*sic*] is already destined for the Duke of Berwick, and in any case a Catholic commander would have been appointed, an officer of experience with the title of Colonel. . . .[2]

Churchill's desire for the appointment, the significance of which is apparent, was, as Sunderland foresaw, frustrated. But the troops stayed in Holland. William and the States-General, for reasons becoming increasingly obvious, refused point-blank to let them go. An acute tension arose between the two Governments. Their fundamental differences were exposed, and for the first time war was felt to be in the air.

Among the notables who now fell under the royal displeasure was Lord Scarsdale, the Lord-Lieutenant of Derbyshire. As First Gentleman-in-Waiting to Prince George of Denmark, he was one of the Cockpit group. He refused to obey the King's orders to rig the impending election, and the Prince and Princess sent Churchill to ask the King what he wished them to do in the matter. James preferred not to give them any instructions. "I leave the decision," he said, "to your sense of duty." On this they did nothing, and the

[1] Mr Hilaire Belloc, *James II* (1928).

[2] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 162, ff. 267 verso, 268.

King was then prevailed upon by his Ministers to order them to dismiss Scarsdale. They refused to do so. The Churchills went to the country to avoid becoming embroiled in so delicate a dispute among their superiors, and being held responsible for the conduct of Princess Anne, who ruled her husband as completely as she herself was guided by Sarah. Barillon notes upon this incident that Lord Churchill seemed to be losing favour every day. He added that Churchill had hoped to get the command of the regiment which was to be maintained—and here his notes were surely only partly correct—*by the French*,[1] as he had thought "that employment would be very useful," besides believing that by it he "would get out of the constant difficulties he was in at home." Churchill, he said, had not been informed of the definite agreement about the regiment.[2]

An order of the Duke of Berwick that thirty Irish Catholics should be enlisted in the 8th Regiment of the Line provoked mutinous complaint. The Lieutenant-Colonel and five captains protested. They declared that they had raised the regiment at their own charges to defend the Crown in time of danger. They had no difficulty in maintaining its strength with English recruits. They threatened to lay down their commissions if these "strangers" were forced upon them. Tried by a council of war, they were cashiered. Clarke's *Life of King James II* says that "Churchill moved the court to sentence the six officers to death." Macaulay could not attempt to make his readers swallow this. Such a punishment was, in any case, beyond the competence of a court-martial in time of peace. Had he endorsed the story he would have been exposed at once. He therefore decided, after his usual method, to make it serve as a proof of his impartiality and love of truth, and thereby to lay the foundations of some more damaging and less easily disprovable libel later on. In recording this story he describes it as "one of the thousand fictions invented at Saint-Germains for the purpose of blackening a character which was black enough without such daubing." This once more reveals his principle: in blackening this man there must be no daubing. The purpose was meritorious, but the execution must be artistic.

The defenders of James's conduct are concerned to exaggerate the number of English Catholics. It is even claimed that one-eighth of the population still adhered, in spite of generations of persecu-

[1] Author's italics.

[2] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 162, ff. 335 *seq.*

tion, to the Old Faith. According to a return of 1689, there were then only 13,856 Catholics in the whole country, or less than one in four hundred of the people.[1] The royal attempt to make a remarkable political spectacle of these few thousands of Papists, advanced to the headship of local and national affairs, even though supported by the Dissenters, was bound to range all the dominant national forces, incomparably stronger, against the Crown. The Pope, in accordance with the policy of the Holy See, which the next chapter will explain, deprecated James's excessive zeal, and his legate in England urged caution and prudence. The old Catholic families in England, apart from individuals advanced to high office, were, as Ailesbury's *Memoirs* show, deeply apprehensive of the headlong adventure upon which the King was launching them. They felt this sudden disproportionate favour was far from being in their true interests, and would only bring upon them the wrath and frightful passions which were being raised all about them. Still the King hardened his heart and strengthened his Army.

The most continuous chronicle of these days is found in Barillon's despatches to Louis XIV.[2] The experienced Ambassador who had long lain in the centre of fashion and affairs and had been confidant and paymaster of the King, the Court, and most of the leading politicians, had unmatched opportunities of knowing and judging the British scene. As early as December 24, 1685, he reports that James is expected to abandon the Episcopal for the Nonconformist party. On January 7 he conveys to Louis James's reaction upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. "The King of England realizes to his core that nothing is so great or so salutary as the task which your Majesty has undertaken." On the 14th, "The King has prorogued Parliament and hopes to dissolve it and obtain a Parliament of Nonconformists." On the 21st he writes of the Catharine Sedley intrigue, "She has been given a title and Duchess of Portsmouth's appointments. In London this is taken as anti-Catholic demonstration." By the 25th the King has been brought back to the fold. "The King," says the Ambassador, "promises he will not see Sedley again. He loves his wife. *Elle est Italienne et fort glorieuse!*" On the 28th he observes, "Liberty of conscience can only be established by a Nonconformist Parliament. In conjunction with this an Irish army will play its part. It is being filled with Catholic officers." On February 19, "Permission has been given for Catholic books to

[1] Dalrymple, ii, 2, 41–42.
[2] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 161–165, *passim.*

be printed. The King is holding to his course in spite of a Court cabal which urges him to summon Parliament." On March 25:

> The King has spoken to me with great confidence of all his designs which are directed principally to the advantage of the Catholic religion which he believes your Majesty has equally at heart, having worked with so much success for the destruction of heresy in France.

"And," he adds, "the Catholic party is on top." May 27: "The troops are in camp at Hounslow." June 21: James has told him that things are not going as well as he hoped. There is a cabal against him. Murray, the Scottish Commissioner, has found proofs of a secret correspondence between the Prince of Orange and the Scots. June 24: "The King is anxious to punish anti-Catholic preachers and for this purpose has set up an Ecclesiastical Commission." August 12: "The Bishop of London refuses to recognize this jurisdiction." On September 13, "It is decided not to call Parliament until the following year." October 13: "James has sent priests to Jersey and Guernsey to convert the Protestants." December 23: "Rochester prefers to quit the Treasury rather than become a Catholic." December 30: "The King has told the Ambassador that the Treasurer must be a man in sympathy with his own ideals, and as Rochester was not, the Treasury would be put in commission." James tells the Ambassador that "Rochester favoured Calvinists." But he reports on January 13, 1687, that "Rochester's dismissal causes great consternation at Court: all fear for their posts." In February comes his first mention of Dykevelt's visit. Dykevelt is expected to concert *avec les Milords Protestants.* It would be difficult to rival this continuous selection of significant events. Well may Charles James Fox call Barillon's letters "worth their weight in gold."

For many months, however, there was still parley. The parsons preached against Popery. Statesmen and divines exerted themselves by the dispersal of pamphlets throughout the country to offset James's attempt to rally the Nonconformists. Halifax issued his cogent *Letter to a Dissenter.* Burnet wrote from The Hague appealing to the Anglicans to stand steadfastly against the King's policy, despite their doctrine of non-resistance; and Fagel, the Dutch greffier,[1] sent a letter, widely circulated in England, which was understood to represent the similar sentiments of William of Orange.

Churchill had, as we have seen, entered fully into all the move-

[1] A high Dutch office corresponding to our Clerk of Parliaments.

ments of protest against the royal policy. In December 1686 Anne had written to Mary assuring her of the strong Anglicanism of the Churchills. Her letter, already noticed, in the spring of 1687 had followed. In March Churchill had conversed with Dykevelt. In May he wrote to William. In September took place his remarkable conversation with James at Winchester. In November he tried to get the command of the English regiments in the Dutch service, and so escape from the net which was closing round him at home. In December he supported and animated Anne in her endeavour to retain in her service Lord Scarsdale despite his refusal, as Lord-Lieutenant of Derbyshire, to obey James's orders. Finally, in January 1688 Churchill told James directly that he would not himself support the repeal of the penal Tests. A contemporary letter of January 12 states, "Lord Churchill swears he will not do what the King requires of him."[1]

No man in all the stately company that represented the national character in these crucial days had made his opinion more plain, but James continued to rely on the intimacies and fidelities of twenty years of service on one hand and his benefactions on the other. He could not realize the truth that personal gratitude could never weigh in any great mind against the issues now presented to Englishmen. He knew Churchill loathed his policy, but fondly believed he loved his person more. At the crunch he was sure he could count on his influence, his diplomacy, and his sword. Meanwhile master and servant dwelt in all their old familiarity, and Churchill was constantly at the King's side in his bedroom, at his toilet, behind his chair at meals, and on horseback beside his carriage, just as he had been since he was a page.

How did this prolonged situation, with its many delicate, repugnant, and irreconcilable features, affect his inner mind? Was he distressed or was he indifferent about his personal relations with the King? On the surface he showed no trace of embarrassment. He possessed to a degree almost sublime the prosaic gift of common sense. His sure judgment and serene, dispassionate nature enabled him, amid the most baffling problems of interest and duty, to dwell inwardly and secretly at peace with his gravely taken decisions; and, of course, without further self-questionings to take in due season all measures necessary to render them effectual. The personalities which warm our hearts often cast much away from sentiment or compunction. Not so this man. He made up his mind with

[1] Johnstone's letters, *cit.* J. Mackintosh, *History of the Revolution*, pp. 197–198.

cold, humane sagacity, and a profound weighing of all the largest and smallest circumstances: and thenceforwardhe faced obloquy, if it were inevitable, as calmly as the ordinary chances of battle, after all had been done to prepare victory with the least loss of life. From the beginning of 1686 onward he was resolved to resist his master's designs. He saw in the Prince of Orange the agent who alone could bring in the indispensable armed power. He made his choice, if the worst should happen, to quit James and join William. He saw that the importance of his part in such a conflict would be measured by his influence over the Princess Anne and by his authority in the Army. If the hour of action should strike, he meant to use both potent factors to achieve, as smoothly and reasonably as possible, the public purpose and success of the course he had chosen.

In modern times such decisions would not be required. An officer or a courtier could resign his employments, retire to the country, and await events or the process of public reaction to his sacrifices. But for Churchill to leave the Court, to resign his command in the Army, would not merely have meant exclusion from all forms of public service and from all share in the impending crisis. No one who had been so close to the sovereign could, while he was in the full flush of manly activity and acquainted with so many secrets, retire without incurring the gravest suspicions. Instead of dwelling at Holywell with his family, he would probably have found himself in the Tower. He could, no doubt, have attempted to leave the kingdom and follow the long string of refugees and exiles who gathered in the Netherlands. But a simple flight like this would have been only to abandon simultaneously his King and his country; at once to desert the cause of Protestantism and to leave the Princess Anne, who had hitherto followed his guidance and depended so much upon him, in complete isolation.

He had certainly made two definite attempts to quit the Court under conditions which would not have entirely divested him of power, and thus to end a personal connexion with James already become false and painful. If Princess Anne had been allowed to go to The Hague, as he had planned, he and Sarah would certainly have gone with her. If he had obtained command of the British troops in Holland he would have been at William's side and in a position to exert an influence upon events. These courses had been barred: and, apart from reducing himself to a cipher and destroying all his means of service to causes which profoundly stirred him, there was nothing left but to remain and face all the dangers and peculiar

reproaches of his station. All he could give the King was the faithful declaration of his opinion, and this on many occasions he made abundantly clear. If James, knowing his mind, employed him, it was at his own risk.

It was remarkable, indeed, that the King still kept Churchill about him. He made it plain to all his intimates that those who sought his favour, or still more his friendship, must embrace his faith. Many of his personal attendants yielded to the glamour of the royal smile or the fear of the royal frown. Salisbury, Melfort, Lorne, and many others thought that office was well worth a Mass. And no one needed official employment more than Churchill. He had no spacious estates in which to dwell, he lived only in the Court, at the head of his regiment, or with the prince he served; but to all attempts upon his faith he remained obdurate. He watched with silent disgust Sunderland, with whom he had many relationships and was to have more, take the plunge. The chief Minister of England, with all his wealth and high birth, bare-headed and bare-footed, knelt in his shirt and knocked humbly at the door of the confessional. Churchill had only to imitate him to be the King's right arm, captain of his host, his long-cherished friend.

He never seems to have had the slightest trouble in rejecting such possibilities. Of course, he was a devout and lifelong Anglican Protestant. Even Macaulay is forced to admit that "he believed implicitly in the religion he had learned as a boy." But we doubt if his choice, as his apologists contend, was made only upon religious grounds. He had a political opinion too. He knew England, and measured with superior accuracy the force of the passions now rising throughout the land. All the great men whose friendship he enjoyed, Halifax, Shrewsbury, Rochester, were moving in the one direction. On that same course he had launched the Princess Anne. Never mind the army at Hounslow! There would—at the worst—be two opposite factions there, and beyond the seas there was the Prince of Orange with trustworthy troops. But suppose it was the French who landed, instead of the Dutch! Still, he had chosen the part he would play.

The phrases 'religious toleration' and 'liberty of conscience' command spontaneous approval in modern times. The penal laws against Catholics and Dissenters were harsh and bitter. To create an England in which all men could seek God as they pleased and dwell in peace with their fellows was indeed a noble aim for a King. But it was not the aim of King James the Second; he sought the conversion

of England to the Roman Catholic faith. The first step to that end was to win toleration for his Catholic subjects. As a make-weight only, he reluctantly but resolutely extended his programme to cover and enlist the Nonconformists. "The King," wrote Barillon, "desires intensely [*avoit fort envie*] that Catholics and Catholics alone should have freedom to practise their religion."[1] Once his first step had been achieved, no one could doubt that Catholic toleration would give place to Catholic ascendancy, and after Catholic ascendancy was securely established Catholic uniformity would have become the goal in England as in France. Everything recorded about James, from his earliest conversion to Rome, proves that he acknowledged no bounds, except those enforced by circumstances, either to his religious zeal or to the compulsions necessary to satisfy it. He admired and applauded the intolerance of Louis XIV; he rejoiced intensely at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; he longed to use against the heresy in which his kingdom was sunk the secular terrors and torments which his brother sovereign could so happily apply.

Our ancestors saw, with the uncanny shrewdness which long, slow, increasing peril engenders, an endless vista of oppression and persecution, decked in a tinsel of fair-seeming toleration. They saw daily landing on their shores the miserable victims of Catholic 'toleration' as practised in France by the most powerful sovereign in the world. They knew the close sympathy and co-operation of the French and English Governments: they saw all that they cared for in this world and the next threatened, and if they failed to defend their rights and freedom, there might soon be no refuge open to them in any part of the globe. They therefore entered, not without scruples and hesitations, but with inexorable resolve, upon the paths of conspiracy and rebellion.

If appeal is made to present-day opinion, the tribunal, while it acclaims 'religious toleration,' will at the same time inquire whether the conspiracy was only upon one side. Must the whole British nation submit, as the French people had been forced to do, to the religious convictions—whatever they might be or might become—of their anointed King? Was that King to be absolved from all reproach if night and day he concerted his plans, marshalled his adherents, trained his armies, in order to change the whole life, laws, and beliefs of his people? Was he entitled to break the solemn promises he had made, to practise every deceit and manœuvre which

[1] Letter dated April 19/29, 1686.

served his purpose, to use all the pressures of force and favour to compel obedience? Was he not guilty in his turn of conspiring against the people over whom he ruled? Was he not in rebellion against all that was most sacred, most precious, to the hearts of millions? Surely, then, it was a double conspiracy that was afoot, and must now on both sides go forward to an issue.

Chapter Fifteen

DRAGONNADE

1678–1688

DURING the ten years which followed the Peace of Nimwegen Louis XIV reached the zenith of his power. England, rent by her domestic quarrels, had ceased to be a factor in European affairs. The Empire was equally paralysed for action in the West. Its whole resources were required to meet the Ottoman invasions. In the same period the Hungarian national movement produced fierce secondary revolts, and the Emperor and his generals could not turn their eyes from the east and from the south. The coalition which had imposed some check upon the aggressions of France in 1668 and 1678 had fallen to pieces. Louis, conscious of his dominating power, gave full play to his ambitions. He sought to revive on a scale more vast the empire of Charlemagne. He contemplated himself as a candidate for the Imperial throne. He was deep in schemes which would secure the reversion of Spain and her New World empire to a French prince. His inroads upon his neighbours were unceasing. He kept England divided by bribery and intrigue. He encouraged the Turks and the Magyars in their assaults upon the Hapsburg monarchy, and thus stabbed the Empire in the back at the same time as his forward pressure upon its western frontiers grew. In 1681 he swooped down to the Rhine, and, alleging the doctrine of the reunion of ancient seigneurial domains, occupied the independent Protestant town of Strasburg, as he had already absorbed the greater part of the Spanish province of Franche-Comté. He also seized Casale, and made further expansions on the north-eastern frontiers of France. In some cases a judicial investigation preceded the seizure, but Strasburg was occupied "without the formality of justice."

In the spring of 1683 the Sultan assembled at Adrianople an army—prodigious for those days—of a quarter of a million men, and marched through Belgrade upon Vienna. The Emperor appealed to Christendom for succour. The Pope raised the standard of a Holy War on his behalf. Louis was content to remark with chilling

indifference that the days of the Crusades were over. John Sobieski, King of Poland, with forty thousand men came to the rescue. In September a Christian army including Sobieski and his Poles and the Austrians under Charles of Lorraine, together with Saxons and Bavarians, defeated the Turks under the walls of Vienna in an eight-hours battle. The victors bound themselves in an alliance, to which Venice also adhered, for a continuous war against the Turks.

These conditions favoured the designs of France, and seemed to secure her recent encroachments along the Rhine and elsewhere. In 1684 a renewed expansionist movement was launched in all directions. Louis bombarded Genoa, besieged Luxembourg, massed troops upon the Spanish frontier, and, the hereditary House of the Palatinate having failed, laid claim through his sister-in-law to large territorial compensations in north-west Germany. The rest of Europe was unable to unite for resistance. In August Louis found himself strong enough to impose upon both branches of the Hapsburgs, in the Empire and in Spain, the twenty-years truce of Ratisbon, which forced them to accept and recognize all his acquisitions. His neighbours cowered beneath his unrelenting scourge in pain and fear.

While these sombre developments filled the secular sphere the Great King's designs against Protestantism became fully manifest. In the course of a very partial education two important principles had been instilled into Louis: the theory of Divine Right and the wickedness of Protestantism. As he grew older he became especially troubled that anyone should not be *de la religion du roi*, and maintained that Protestantism was the harbinger of *le mauvais exemple de la liberté*.[1] From 1661 to 1679, however, he had been contented with endeavouring to convert the Huguenots in his realm by propaganda, and with irritating them by unfavourable interpretations of their charter of existence, the Edict of Nantes. A bureau was set up to encourage reversions to Catholicism by paying 12*s*. 6*d*. for each convert. To this bureau the King contributed generously. But such persuasions did not procure widespread or genuine conversions, and sterner measures were considered necessary. In 1680 a Colonel Marillac was despatched to Poitou with a regiment of dragoons. Here they were billeted on rich Huguenots, whom they proceeded to eat out of house and home. In the course of their duties they also forcibly dragged women, old men, and children to the churches, where they were sprinkled with holy water and declared Catholics.

[1] *Cf.* E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, t. 7; D. Ogg, *Europe in the Seventeenth Century*, chapter vii.

Other Protestants were tortured, whipped, or raped, and the total result was thirty thousand conversions in this district. The dragonnades had begun. 'Dragonnade' summed up the whole policy of France to Europe.

Madame de Maintenon, now the mistress of the King's pieties and secretly his wife, was dubious about the sincerity of these conversions, and deprecated the more violent forms of persecution; but the King regarded himself as an apostle, although, observes Saint-Simon, his methods of evangelization diverged somewhat from those of the original Twelve. All this was but preliminary to the crowning act of intolerance. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked. Throughout all the expanding dominions of France Protestantism became a crime. Expropriation, imprisonment, and death were the penalties by which this policy—terrible to hundreds of thousands of loyal, industrious Frenchmen—was enforced; and by a frightful provision flight from tyranny across the frontiers was forbidden, as it is at the present time from Russia. Thus our ancestors saw the all-powerful, all-grasping military monarch become also the avowed, implacable foe of Protestantism, and, indeed, of political freedom of every kind throughout Europe; and the aggressions of Louis were simultaneously launched upon the hearths and upon the souls of all mankind within his reach.

We have no patience with the lackey pens which have sought to invest this long, hateful process with the appearances of dignity and honour. During the whole of his life Louis XIV was the curse and pest of Europe. No worse enemy of human freedom has ever appeared in the trappings of polite civilization. Insatiable appetite, cold, calculating ruthlessness, monumental conceit, presented themselves armed with fire and sword. The veneer of culture and good manners, of brilliant ceremonies and elaborate etiquette, only adds a heightening effect to the villainy of his life's story. Better the barbarian conquerors of antiquity, primordial figures of the abyss, than this high-heeled, beperiwigged dandy, strutting amid the bows and scrapes of mistresses and confessors to the torment of his age. Petty and mediocre in all except his lusts and power, the Sun King disturbed and harried mankind during more than fifty years of arrogant pomp.

When the amusement of wars was temporarily suspended, his building extravagances maintained the ceaseless depletion of the wealth of France. Thousands of his soldiers and workmen perished in a futile attempt to bring the waters of the Eure to make his fountains play at Versailles. The French nobility, invited or sum-

moned from their estates, were housed in one teeming hotbed of subservience, scandal, and intrigue in the royal palace. Thus they lost all contact with their tenantry and all influence upon political affairs, and the French Crown was deprived of the strength of a patriciate to unite it with the people. All was sacrificed to the worship of a single man. The past of France and its future, its revenues and its manhood, alike were squandered for his personal pride. He never dared in all his wars to lead his armies in a battle. He preened himself under obsequious flattery, and read aloud or recited, with tears coursing down his cheeks, the poems and inscriptions which dutiful men of letters composed in his honour. By a life more narrowly personal even than that of Napoleon he blindly prepared the guillotines which after a hundred years had passed slew his blameless descendant, and destroyed not only the dynasty, but the system of society which was his supreme ideal.

It was fortunate indeed that Louis's aggressions were universal. During the same years when his flail fell so cruelly upon the Huguenots and when he saw himself the heaven-appointed champion of the Old Faith, he engaged in a most grievous quarrel with the Papacy. Like Henry VIII of England, the Grand Monarch was "a good Catholic who wanted to be his own Pope." All in France must bow to his will. "He found it insufferable," says Ranke in his massive work,[1] "that the Roman See should pursue a policy not only independent of, but also frequently in direct opposition to his own." He marshalled and disciplined the French clergy with the same thoroughness as his armies. He grasped with arrogant hand all ecclesiastical revenues and patronage. He claimed not only temporal, but in many directions spiritual control. The Gallican Church yielded themselves with patriotic adulation to his commands. They vied with the courtiers, poets, and dramatists of Versailles in enthusiastic servility. All who diverged from the line of march fell under the same blighting hand which had destroyed the Huguenots.

But outside France Louis in this sphere encountered a resolute resistance. In that long line of men, often remarkable, who have occupied the Papal throne Innocent XI holds one of the foremost places. The virtues of this eminently practical and competent saint, who began life as a soldier, shine with a modern glow across the generations. How he practised humility and self-denial in all that concerned himself; how he eschewed nepotism and luxury; how he forced the economies in the Vatican budget which enabled him at

[1] *History of the Popes*, vol. iii, Book VIII, § 16.

once to restore its own solvency and to relieve its debtors; how he purified every department of Papal administration—all has been faithfully and deservedly set forth. In manner gentle, in temper tolerant, in mood humane, in outlook broad and comprehending, he nevertheless possessed and exercised an inflexible will and an imperturbable daring. He used his spiritual weapons with the address of an accomplished duellist, and he understood the political balances of Europe as well as any statesman then alive. Such was the Pope who withstood Louis XIV with the skill and patience of William of Orange, and defeated him as decisively as did Marlborough.

The head of the Catholic faith disapproved of French persecution of the Protestants. He condemned conversions effected by such means. Christ had not used armed apostles. "Men must be led to the temple, not dragged into it." Louis organized the Gallican Church against the Holy See. He sent his Ambassador to Rome with a heavy escort of cavalry—a diplomatic dragonnade. "They come with horses and chariots," said Innocent, "but we will walk in the name of the Lord." He withdrew all spiritual authority from the French episcopacy. He pronounced decrees of interdict and excommunication; and what was perhaps of no less immediate importance, he wove himself into the whole European combination against the predominance of France. Across the gulf of the Reformation and the Inquisition he weighted the swords of Protestant armies. He comforted the Catholic Emperor. He consorted with the Calvinist Prince of Orange. To him more than to any other individual we owe the fact that the wars of William and, after Innocent's death, of Marlborough were, for Europe at large, secular struggles for worldly dominion, and that the lines of battle were no longer, as in preceding generations, the lines of faith. In the armies of the Grand Alliance Catholic and Protestant troops fought in unquestioning comradeship. The Mass and the Anglican Communion were celebrated side by side in camp and field, while hard by Dutch Calvinists, English Puritans, and Scottish Presbyterians raised their psalms and prayers before—all together—falling, united in hearty zest, upon the common foe.

> Shall I ask the brave soldier who fights by my side
> In the cause of mankind, if our creeds agree?
> Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried,
> If he kneel not before the same altar with me?[1]

Thus was the age of religious toleration opened by the sword

[1] Thomas Moore, *Come send round the Wine.*

and thus, amid Catholic divisions, did the Protestant states preserve their souls alive.

Meanwhile throughout Europe the aggrandizement of France and the persecution of the Huguenots were witnessed with dismay or despair. Upon the Great Elector the effect of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, following the accession of a Catholic King in England, was decisive. All his balancings between France and the Empire disappeared, and he extended the hand of friendship to Vienna. By the Edict of Potsdam he welcomed to Prussia the Huguenot refugees now fleeing at the peril of their lives from the oppression of their sovereign. Some of the greatest warriors of France quitted their native land for ever. The renowned Huguenot marshal Schomberg took service with the Great Elector, and eventually became the trusted lieutenant of William of Orange. Henri de Massue, second Marquis de Ruvigny, was so distinguished in war and diplomacy that Louis offered him special exemption from the consequences of the revocation. Ruvigny refused, and made his way to England. As Earl of Galway he became later on one of Marlborough's leading generals in the War of the Spanish Succession. "The whole of Europe," wrote a Dutch statesman, "is inundated with enemies of Louis XIV since the expulsion of the Huguenots."[1] Not only the Protestants, but nearly all the members of the Holy Roman Empire, especially those in southern and western Germany, now drew together for mutual protection. In July 1686 the League of Augsburg came into being. This treaty, though ostensibly defensive and to maintain the *status quo*—including the humbling Truce of Ratisbon—was also a military convention against France of detailed, strict, and far-reaching obligation. Neither Holland, which sought to go farther, nor England, which was pressed against her will towards the opposite side, was as yet enlisted.

Nevertheless, throughout all classes in England a deep fear and loathing of France began to spread. Not only were the ruling classes, in spite of their fierce divisions, profoundly affected, but the mass of the nation was stirred to its depths. In that sultry summer of 1685 Edmund Verney voiced the savage hatred of Louis XIV among the English squires: "I heare he stinckes alive and his cankers will stinck worse when he is dead, and so will his memory to all eternity."[2] In the ale-houses or upon the village greens ballads and songs expressed the popular sentiment against the French. In the parish churches

[1] *Cit.* von Noorden, *Europäische Geschichte*, p. 30.
[2] Cf. *Memoirs of the Verney Family during the Seventeenth Century.*

collections were made to aid the Huguenots. The refugees now beginning to stream into England in considerable numbers, bringing their arts and crafts with them, were received with sympathy and hospitality from every class. French weavers, silk-workers, and paper-makers were welcomed not as aliens but as brothers by the English working-folk, and the foundations of important future industries were laid by their skill and trade-secrets. Acute observers in France like Vauban and, later, Fénelon watched with sorrow, as their writings record, the fundamental enmity growing between the French and all their neighbours, or measured with alarm the increasing strain and injury which its gigantic military burden cast upon their own country. Thus slowly, fitfully, but none the less surely, the sense of a common cause grew across the barriers of class, race, creed, and interest in the hearts of millions of men.

All moved to climax in the fateful year 1688. The Grand Monarch's quarrel with the Papacy was at its height. To disputes about pontifical authority and 'extra-territoriality' was added the conflict for the Electorate of Cologne. There were associated in those days with the Archbishopric of Cologne the sees of Munster and Liége. Thus the realm of Cologne comprised the long belt of land on the very marches which divided France from Germany and Holland, including the control of all the principal bridgeheads on the main rivers. A vacancy in the Archbishopric now occurred. Louis chose the one man of all others who was most hateful and dangerous to the Protestant Powers, and who was at the same time specially obnoxious to the Pope. Cardinal Fürstenberg, Bishop of Strasburg, was a German ecclesiastic who for more than thirty years had been a French tool. He had, in fact, become the supreme manager of the French diplomatic missions in Germany. The occupation of Cologne by French troops followed the election of Fürstenberg. These events showed that not only the Palatinate but the Electorate of Cologne was about to be effectively incorporated in the French system. Against this Holland, Prussia, the Germanic Princes, the Emperor Leopold, and the Papacy were united in common interest and equal danger. Meanwhile the Turkish pressure upon the Empire was decisively relieved. The great battle of Mohacs, won so surprisingly against orders by an Imperialist commander of rising fame, Prince Eugene, broke for a time the Ottoman offensive power. Large Austrian armies were liberated for the west. Only the weight of Protestant England was wanting to create in its fullest extent the Grand Alliance against France. But England was in the grip of James II.

Chapter Sixteen

THE PROTESTANT WIND

1688—AUTUMN

THE lines of battle were now slowly yet remorselessly drawing up in our island. Everything pointed, as in 1642, to the outbreak of civil war; but now the grouping of the forces was far different from the days when Charles I had unfurled his standard at Nottingham. The King had a large, well-equipped regular army, with a powerful artillery. He believed himself master of the best, if not at the moment the largest, navy afloat. He could call for powerful armed aid from Ireland and from France. He held the principal sea-ports and arsenals under trusty Catholic governors. He enjoyed substantial revenues. He had on his side his Catholic co-religionists, all the personal following which the Government and the Court could command, and, strangely assorted with these, a very considerable concourse of Dissenters and traditional Roundheads. He assumed that the Church of England was paralysed by its doctrine of non-resistance, and he had been careful not to allow any Parliament to assemble for collective action.

Ranged against him were not only the Whigs, but almost all the old friends of the Crown. The men who had made the Restoration, the sons of the men who had fought and died for his father at Marston Moor and Naseby, the Church whose bishops and ministers had so long faced persecution for the principle of Divine Right, the universities who had melted their plate for King Charles's coffers and sent their young scholars to his armies, the nobility and landed gentry whose interests had seemed so bound up with the monarchy: all, with bent heads and burning hearts, must now prepare themselves to outface their King in arms.

It would indeed have been a strange war in which the sons of Puritans, Roundheads, and regicides would have marched for a Catholic and catholicizing King against Churchmen and Cavaliers, while the mass of the people remained helpless, passionate, terrified spectators. It would have been a war of the extremes against the means; a war of heterogeneous coalition against the central body

of English wealth, rank, and grit. Few there were who could truly measure the value of all these various elements and the force of their harmonious combination, should it occur. And above and beyond all lay the incalculable hazards and accidents of the battlefield.

Very fearsome and dubious must the prospect have seemed to the nobility, gentry, and clergy who embodied the life and meaning of the England that we still know. They had no army; they had no lawful means of resistance, expression, or debate. They could not appeal to the unenfranchised millions of peasants and townsmen. They saw in mental eye the King in martial panoply advancing upon them with all that royal power in whose sanctity they themselves were the chief believers, with French troops ready to descend at any moment upon their shores to quell rebellion, with the children of the Ironsides hand in hand with Jesuit priests. Never did the aristocracy or the Established Church face a sterner test or serve the nation better than in 1688. They never flinched; they never doubted. They comprehended and embodied "the genius of the English nation,"[1] they faced this hideous, fraudulent, damnable hotch-potch of anti-national designs without a tremor, and they conquered without a blow. Why they conquered and, above all, why they conquered bloodlessly, turned upon the action of no more than as many men and women as can be counted upon one's fingers.

Nearly all the preliminaries of the struggle in England were concerned with public opinion. The King could give his orders to the land and sea forces, and to all his great officers and adherents. He possessed a complete executive machine which, if it worked, was probably irresistible. But the nobility, the parsons, squires, and merchants who formed the conscious entity of England, were divided by the recent feuds of Whig and Tory and by many gradations of unorganized thought and temper. Their salvation depended upon their cohesion, and that cohesion could only be achieved by spontaneous action arising in a hundred loosely connected centres. Here lay the main risk. Unless their leaders could act together, each playing his part in his own station, their chances were precarious. Together they had to wait for indefinite and uncertain periods, together they must strike with the hour. Yet to concert action was treason.

In so wide and secret a confederacy, with scanty means of council and communication, every divergence, personal or local, was pregnant with disaster. Two main divisions of policy persisted almost to the end; each had massive arguments. The moderates, led by

[1] See Churchill's conversation with the King at Winchester (pp. 214–215).

Halifax and Nottingham, urged caution and delay. The Ministry, they pleaded, was breaking up. Sunderland, Godolphin, Dartmouth were now striving to restrain the headstrong King. Alternatively, "Let him have rope enough!" Either things would get better or an overwhelming case would be presented upon which all could unite. No case had yet arisen to warrant actual treason. Nothing was more imprudent than a premature resort to arms. Remember Sedgemoor only three years ago, and how a standing army rallies to its duty once fighting has begun, and the soldiers see an enemy before them. "All is going well, if you do not spoil it."

On the other hand stood the party of action, headed by Danby. Danby was the stalwart. He was the first man of great position who definitely set himself to bring William and a foreign army into England. With Danby were the Whig leaders—Shrewsbury, Devonshire, and some others. These men urged that the danger was growing each day; that the King was bringing over Irish troops, that the Catholic grip upon the Army was strengthening, that the House of Lords could be watered and the House of Commons packed, and above all that no reform or mitigation could be trusted from such a bigot. The only hope lay in a disciplined Protestant army. As early as the spring of 1688 they took a most audacious decision. They invited William to invade England; and William replied that if he received at the right moment a formal request from leading English statesmen he would come, and that he would be ready by September. What followed played into the hands of these resolute men.

From April onward the party of action made good preparations. They took others into their confidence in proportion to what they needed to know. Trusty persons were informed, and their duties allotted. Efforts were made to draw in the moderates. The whole design was laid before Nottingham. At first he agreed, and then, upon misgivings in which cowardice played no part, he retracted his promise. How deadly the conspiracy had become can be judged from the story that his fellow-statesmen, leaders of a great party, Shrewsbury at their head, determined to ensure his silence by shooting him. He admitted to them that it was their right.[1] Eventually, and with justice, they trusted to his oath. A nation-wide conspiracy was on foot by the end of May. Detailed plans were made, and a great many personal contacts established. The land was full of whisperings and of mysterious comings and goings. Sunderland,

[1] Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, pp. 290–291.

elusive, baffling to his enemies, incomprehensible to posterity, heard and understood much, not all of which was imparted to his master. Barillon knew less, but reported all he knew to both the Kings whose interests he served. Louis took a grave view. James shut his ears, pursued his course, and reviewed his troops.

Upon the troops much, though not all, depended. If the Army obeyed its orders and fought for the King, England would be torn by a civil war the end of which no man could foresee. But if the Army refused to fight or was prevented from fighting by any means, then the great issues at stake would be settled bloodlessly. It seems certain, though there is no actual proof, that the general revolutionary conspiracy had a definite military core; and that this formed itself in the Army, or at least among the high officers of the Army, step by step with the designs of the statesmen. The supreme object of all the conspirators, civil or military, was to coerce the King without using physical force. We cannot doubt that this was Churchill's long-formed intention. It is reasonable to assume that in this resolve he took every measure in his power; and, of course, these measures contemplated, if the need arose, treason and mutiny as known to the law, and personal treachery to his master. With him in secret consultation were the colonels of the two Tangier regiments, Kirke and Trelawny, the Duke of Grafton, commanding the Guards, the Duke of Ormonde, and a number of other officers.

Bishop Burnet has summed up the case very fairly. Of the military conspiracy he wrote in 1691:

> The chief officers of the army were tried [approached]; Churchill, Kirk, and Trelawny went into it; and Trelawny got his brother that was Bishop of Bristol to join in it. Churchill did likewise undertake for Prince George and the Princess Anne; and those officers said they durst answer for the much greatest part of the army, and promised to do their utmost endeavours to bring as many as possibly they could into it. Churchill has been much censured; for as he had risen in the king's service through several degrees up to be a favourite, so a kindness which had begun upon the king's commerce with his sister was now so well fixed, that no man had more of personal favour and had found greater effects of it than he had. His coming into this design had the appearance of treachery and ingratitude, which has brought him under much reproach. But as he never betrayed any of the king's secrets to the prince, so he never set the king on violent measures, but, on the contrary, as oft as he spake to him of his affairs (which was indeed but seldom), he gave him always moderate counsels.[1]

[1] Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, pp. 291–292.

Bishops, generals, Jesuits, and Nonconformist leaders eyed each other in a sinister silence as spring blossomed into summer. And now events struck their hammer-blows. At the end of April James issued a second and more far-reaching Declaration of Indulgence. In a reasoned manifesto he bid for the whole-hearted support of all —and they were many—who suffered—and they suffered grievously —from the penal laws. He ordered that the Declaration should be read in all the churches. On May 18 the Seven Bishops, headed by the Primate, the venerable Sancroft, protested against this use of the dispensing power. The clergy obeyed their ecclesiastical superiors, and from few pulpits throughout the country was the Declaration read. James, furious at disobedience and apparently scandalized at this departure, by the Church he was seeking to undermine, from its doctrine of non-resistance, demanded that the Bishops should be put on trial for seditious libel. Sunderland, now definitely alarmed, endeavoured to dissuade the King from this extreme step. He saw the spark which would fire the mine on which he knew himself to dwell. Even Lord Chancellor Jeffreys told Clarendon that the King was going too far, and had also the impudence to observe, "As to the judges, they are most of them rogues."[1] The King persisted: the trial was ordered, and the Bishops, all of whom refused the proffered bail, were committed to the Tower.

On June 10, while the trial was still pending, the Queen gave birth to a son. This prodigious event produced general consternation. Until then every one might hope that the stresses which racked English society would die with the death of the King. Till then the accession of either Mary, the heir presumptive, or Anne, the next in order, promised an end to the struggle between a Catholic monarch and a Protestant people. Peaceable folk could therefore be patient until the tyranny was past. But here was the succession assured in the male line to an indefinite series of Catholic princes. It was unendurable.

The conveyance of the Bishops to the Tower, their two days' trial, and their acquittal on June 30 by a Middlesex jury, were occasions of passionate outbursts in their favour by all classes in the capital. Enormous crowds thronged the river-banks to watch the barges carry the prisoners to and fro, or knelt in the streets in the hopes of being blessed by them. The humblest citizens were swayed by the same emotions which convulsed the rank and fashion of London. The troops at Hounslow joined in the rejoicings of the

[1] Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, ii, 179.

people. "What is that clamour?" asked the King, as he was leaving camp after a visit. "Sire, it is nothing; the soldiers are glad that the Bishops are acquitted." "Do you call that nothing?" said James. These manifestations were repeated as the news spread throughout the country.

On the same night, while cannon and tumults proclaimed the public joy, the seven leaders of the party of action met at Shrewsbury's town house, and there and then signed and dispatched their famous letter to William. The signatories were Shrewsbury, Danby, Russell, Bishop Compton, Devonshire, Henry Sidney, and Lumley. Of these seven Compton had long been in the closest touch with Churchill at the Cockpit, yet he did not know how far Churchill was engaged, nor exactly what he knew. Shrewsbury and Russell were Churchill's intimate friends. Though not always colleagues in office, all three acted in concert for many years.

The letter, in the sure hands of Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor, sped to The Hague, and its authors dispersed throughout the island for the purpose of levying war upon the King. Shrewsbury, though brought up a Catholic, had become a Protestant in the storms of 1681. He never detached himself from his new faith. Now, after mortgaging his estates to raise £40,000, he crossed the sea to join William and thenceforward stood at his side. Danby undertook to raise Yorkshire; Compton toured the North "to see his sisters." Devonshire, who had been condemned to an enormous fine for assaulting a Court partisan in the royal palace and had lain since 1685 in rebellious obscurity at Chatsworth, raised a regiment of horse from his tenantry. William, stricken in his ambition by the birth of a male heir, exclaimed, "Now or never!" and began the preparation of his expedition.

Churchill was not of sufficient political rank or territorial influence to be a signatory. Whether, if asked, he would have signed is unknown; but there is little doubt he would have deemed it an honour. Though of secondary importance, he lay more in the centre of the web and held more threads than the larger figures. Day by day he waited on the King, and watched the temper of the troops. Night by night he sat in the narrow, devoted cluster at the Cockpit. If he was in touch with Shrewsbury and Russell and their party of action, he was also intimate with Sunderland, the chief Minister, and with Halifax, the outstanding moderate. His countenance was inscrutable, his manner bland, his discretion unfailing.

The birth of the baby Prince who set so many ponderous wheels

in motion was received with general incredulity, sincere or studiously affected. From the beginning doubts had been thrown upon the belated pregnancy of the Queen. The prayers and intercessions in which the Catholics had indulged, and their confident predictions that a son would be born as the result, led to a widespread conviction that a trick had been practised. The legend that a supposititious child had been smuggled into St James's Palace in a warming-pan was rife before the ashes of the official bonfires had vanished from the streets. By a strange imprudence of the King's the majority of persons present at the birth were Papists, the wives of Papists, or foreigners. The Archbishop was absent: he had that day been conducted to the Tower. Neither of the Hydes had been summoned, though as Privy Councillors, brothers-in-law of the King, and uncles of the two Princesses whose rights to the Crown were affected, their presence would have been natural. The Dutch Ambassador, who had a special duty to William, was not invited. More important perhaps than all, Princess Anne was not there. She was at Bath. The Churchills were with her, and Sarah no doubt received an authentic account from the still beautiful Frances, now Countess of Tyrconnel, who was on the spot.

It has been suggested that Anne had kept deliberately out of the way at the far-seeing suggestion of her favourites. How they could foretell the swift and premature accouchement, of which but twelve hours' notice was given, or imagine the controversies that would arise about it, is not explained. Nevertheless, the fact that Anne was absent enabled her to adopt a placid but unshakable scepticism upon the event which barred her succession to the Crown. "I shall never now be satisfied," she wrote suavely to Mary, "whether the child be true or false. Maybe 'tis our brother. . . . Where one believes it, a thousand do not. For my part unless they do give a very plain demonstration . . . I shall ever be of the number of unbelievers." When the Privy Council waited on her to present depositions affirming the reality of the birth, Anne took refuge in the pious observation that the King's word was far more to her than any deposition. William, who had incautiously authorized a thanksgiving service when the news was received, made haste to align himself and his consort with the highly convenient and popular conviction. It was vital to the nation to establish the doctrine that the child was an impostor. Sincerely attached to the principle of legitimacy, confronted with the appearance of a Papist heir, the English Protestants had no other means of escape from the intolerable admission. With

the characteristic instinct and ingenuity of the English people for reconciling facts, law, and propriety with public interests and their own desires, they enshrined the legend of the warming-pan as a fundamental article of political faith. It was not dispensed with until after some eventful years, and when the question had ceased to have any practical importance.

Churchill now, as the days of action drew near, renewed his pledge given fifteen months before, and wrote to William:

> Mr Sydney will let you know how I intend to behave myself: I think it is what I owe to God and my country. My honour I take leave to put into your royal highness's hands, in which I think it safe. If you think there is anything else that I ought to do, you have but to command me, and I shall pay an entire obedience to it, being resolved to die in that religion that it has pleased God to give you both the will and power to protect.[1]

Such a letter written by a serving officer, at a time when conspiracy was rife and invasion imminent, was a deadly guarantee. Its capture or betrayal would justly involve the forfeit of his life at the hands of either a civil or a military tribunal. The invitation of the seven notables had been sent in the precautions of cipher. But Churchill's letter, which survives to this day, is in his own handwriting, signed with his name. He seems to have wished to share in a special degree the risks which his friends the signatories had incurred.

William could claim the fulfilment of such a gage at sight. If events had been different, if the great enterprise had never been undertaken, still it would have remained in his chest or in that of his successor, whoever he might be; and at any time, in conditions which had no relation to the issues of that day, it might be produced. If James II had made peace with his people and had reigned for the whole span of his life, this letter was a weapon of blackmail which a Dutch Ambassador could use upon Churchill for persuasion or revenge. Hardly ever in his life of reticence, diplomacy, and precaution had he given such a hostage. "Churchill," says Macaulay,

> in a letter written with a certain elevation of language, which was the sure mark that he was going to commit a baseness, declared that he was determined to perform his duty to heaven and to his country, and that he put his honour absolutely into the hands of the Prince of Orange. William doubtless read these words with one of those

[1] The original letter was acquired by Professor Trevelyan. He has presented it to the author, and his courtesy has allowed its reproduction here in facsimile.

> bitter and cynical smiles which gave his face its least pleasing expression. It was not his business to take care of the honour of other men; nor had the most rigid casuists pronounced it unlawful in a general to invite, to use, and to reward the services of deserters whom he could not but despise.[1]

Thus we see that the elevation of language is an aggravation of the offence, that a declaration by a man in a delicate position that, when the time comes, he can be counted upon to run all risks for a worthy public cause is made more despicable because it is well written. The simple dignity of the language could not easily be excelled; and we do not think that William read it with "one of those bitter and cynical smiles which gave his face its least pleasing expression." He was appealing to Englishmen to give him just such guarantees. We know that at this time he liked and admired Churchill, that they looked at European political and religious problems through the same eyes, that they had talked long together ten years before; that they both saw the domination of France as the danger and the marshalling of Protestantism as the only means of countering it. We remember how keenly William had desired Churchill to be the English Ambassador at The Hague. We have seen how Churchill would have liked to have the command of the British contingent in the Dutch pay. There are no grounds, there is no warrant, except Macaulay's spiteful imagination, for assuming that William's features lost their more pleasing expression in a bitter and cynical smile. If he was the master-statesman Macaulay has depicted, he must have realized that this was a practical and binding pledge from a remarkable man in a desperate hour. We shall recur to this incident when dealing with Marlborough's alleged correspondence with King James.

The time has now come to consider the part played by Sunderland. He was the son of a pure Cavalier, Henry Spencer, killed at Newbury. His mother, Dorothy Sidney, a gifted, brilliant woman, belonged to one of the most famous families on the opposite side. Thus the best Cavalier and Puritan blood flowed in his veins. He had married Anne Digby, of a Parliamentary stock. He seemed to be born into the very heart and centre of social and political England, and he was connected with both parties by ties of blood. He never made speeches; but he had a vast familiarity with leading figures in every camp and throughout the aristocracy. He knew better than any other man the politics and inclination of the different noble families;

[1] *History*, ii, 443.

and he had access to all. Hence his knowledge and opinions were invaluable to a succession of sovereigns. He had voted for the Exclusion Bill, but was soon back in Charles's Cabinet, and acquired the highest favour under James. He had ousted the Hydes by outbidding them in favouring James's autocratic and Papist designs. To ingratiate himself with the King he had become a Papist. He was now virtually Prime Minister. He had encouraged the King on the course which led to his ruin. We find him later, only two years after the Revolution, taking his place as the trusted confidant of William III, and during practically the whole of William's reign he was the power behind the making of Cabinets. An astounding record, outstripping the fiercest hatreds and mounting upon every form of error, treachery, and disaster!

By the autumn of 1688 Sunderland was in full retreat. He had protested to James against the second Declaration of Indulgence and the trial of the Bishops. He laboured, on the other hand, to restrain Churchill from taking premature decisions. He was, he hinted, about to make an eleventh-hour effort to save the situation. The King would call a free Parliament; patience! and all would be well. While he had helped the King upon his fatal courses, and profited by so doing, he nevertheless dissuaded him from bringing in the French troops and accepting the fleet which Louis XIV so earnestly proffered. While he pocketed the money of which he was in constant need from France, he was also in touch with William. Thus it has been said that he lured his master to his follies and his fate, turned away from him at the end, and at the same time procured his rejection of the French aid which might have saved him. Indeed, so strange was his nature and conduct that coherence has been found in the explanation that all his actions were from the beginning part of a plot to destroy James, or at least that he had by now joined the great conspiracy.

Those who hold this opinion point to the disloyal letters written by his wife to her alleged lover, Henry Sidney, plotting at The Hague, while Sunderland was the chief responsible Minister of the Crown. Certainly no man played a greater part in the downfall of King James, except King James himself. When the crash came in October Sunderland fled to Holland, and was by no means ill received. The whole series of his actions from 1685 to 1690, when he was welcomed back to high office by William III, points to his having been in cordial relations with William at least throughout the whole of 1688. If we reject this theory of a plot, it is not because

it does not fit the facts. Such complicated and largely purposeless treachery at the cost of so many toils and dangers, while other more profitable and attractive courses were open, cannot be reconciled with design or pattern in any form. Sunderland was during the reigns of Charles and James, in the aspect of a competent official, one of those dangerous beings who, with many gifts of mind, have no principle of action; who do not care what is done, so long as they are in the centre of it; to whom bustle, excitement, intrigue, are the breath of life; and whose dance from one delirium to another seems almost necessary to their sanity. The alarming experiences of 1688 and the advance of old age broke his nerve; and we shall see him under King William a discreet, timid, wise counsellor, wondering with all the world how he could have escaped so well the consequences of his violent days.

All this impending struggle, so ominous for our island people, so decisive upon their destiny, was, as the last chapter has shown, one factor, but a vital factor, in the world war now about to begin. Across the sea, watching with strained vigilance the assembling armies of France, lay William of Orange with the troops and fleet of Holland. England, in her griefs and rages, was the decisive piece on the Continental board. Profoundly Protestant, vehemently anti-French, was she, with all her resources, to be cast upon the side of Gallican intolerance and French aggrandizement? Was she so to be committed, probably with fatal effect, against the whole instinct and interest of her people by the perverse obstinacy of a single man? Protestant Europe and Protestant England alike looked to William, as the champion of freedom against the many-sided tyrannies of Louis, to break the accursed spell. William accepted the dangerous duty. In the terse words of Halifax, "he took England on the way to France."

Before the Prince of Orange could invade England he had not only to prepare and assemble his troops and ships, but to obtain freedom to use them for such a purpose. At a moment when the whole of the French Army was massed and ready for immediate advance, it was not easy to persuade the threatened princes of Germany or the anxious burghers of Holland that their best chance of safety lay in sending the Dutch Army into England upon an expedition so full of uncertainty. The Great Elector was dead, but Frederick III, who had succeeded him in April, was resolute for war and, like his father, convinced that England must be gained. He even lent William a contingent of Prussian troops under the

command of Marshal Schomberg. The other German princes acquiesced in the Prussian view. Most Catholic Spain set political above religious considerations, and made no bones about an expedition to dethrone a Catholic king. The Emperor alone demurred. Although dethronement was not suggested, his religious scruples were aroused. Lulled by communications from the Vatican at William's instance, he eventually agreed to an expedition to restore harmony in England and detach her from France. Only a dominating sense of common danger could have united these diverse interests and creeds upon a strategy so far-seeing and broadminded.

William had next to convince the States-General: they had agreed to an enormous expenditure during the last two years upon the Dutch armaments; their land forces were upon a war footing, their fleet decisively stronger than the English. But the decision of the Dutch, and their ruler also, must be governed by the action of France. If the French armies marched against Holland the whole Dutch strength would be needed to meet the invader, and England must perforce be left to her fate. If, on the other hand, Louis struck upon the Rhine at Prussia and Germany, then the enterprise on which the Stadtholder's heart was set could go forward. All therefore hung in suspense. Meanwhile a great fleet of transports, with all the necessary supplies, had gathered in the Texel under the protection of the Dutch Navy, and the expeditionary force lay concentrated close at hand.

Louis XIV, with whom the initiative rested, delayed his choice till the last moment. He was ready to come to James's aid if James would definitely throw England on to the French side in the impending European struggle. All through July and August he offered him money, an army of thirty thousand men, and the French fleet. The French troops would enforce discipline and loyalty upon the English Army, and together they could certainly crush all resistance to the royal will. James, partly from patriotic pride in the independence of his country, partly from fear of the resentment which a French alliance would arouse among his subjects, and under the advice of Sunderland, made light of his own dangers and dallied with the French offers. He was still absorbed in his electioneering plans to produce by hook or by crook a House of Commons favourable to the repeal of the Test Act. All prospect of this would be swept away by an outbreak of war, the announcement of a French alliance or the arrival of French troops. On September 2 Louis, with large armies straining at the leash, and compelled by the military

situation, resolved to bring matters to a head. He delivered through his Ambassador at The Hague an ultimatum to the Dutch Republic. It was declared that William's military preparations were a menace to England: that "friendship and alliance" existed between England and France, and that any enterprise undertaken by the Dutch against England would involve an immediate French declaration of war on Holland.

This violent step defeated its own object in both the countries affected. The States-General were enraged by the menace. James, in the utmost embarrassment at the declaration, publicly repudiated all idea of an alliance. The rejection of his aid not only offended Louis; it aroused his suspicions. It was so contrary to James's vital interests that it seemed explicable only by some secret arrangement between James and William, or between Sunderland and the States-General. The irresolute, shifting policy of the English Government lent colour to the belief in Holland that it was tied to France, and in France that it was tied to Holland. At any rate, the die was cast. Louis abandoned the hope of procuring England as an ally; he must be content with seeing her, as he believed and trusted, torn by a savage civil war in which William would be involved, and during which the island kingdom could play no part in Europe. On September 25 all the French armies were set in motion, not against the Dutch frontier, but towards the middle Rhine. From the moment that this movement became certain the States-General eagerly granted William permission for his English descent, and James's hour was come.

As the autumn weeks slipped by, excitement and tension grew throughout the island, and the vast conspiracy which now comprised the main strength of the nation heaved beneath the surface of affairs. The King's attempt to bring in some of the regiments of Irish Roman Catholics which Tyrconnel had raised for him produced symptoms so menacing that the process was abandoned. The hatred and fears of all classes found expression in an insulting, derisive ballad against the Irish and the Papists. *Lilliburlero*, like *Tipperary* in our times, was on all lips, in all ears, and carried a cryptic message of war to all hearts. "Lilliburlero" and "Bullen-a-lah" had been the passwords of the Irish in their massacres of Protestants in 1641. The doggerel lines, written by Lord Wharton with deep knowledge of the common folk and their modes of thought and expression, had no provable relation to William—nor to invasion or revolt. But the jingle of the chorus made an impression

upon the Army "that cannot be imagined by those that saw it not. The whole army, and at last the people, both in city and country, were singing it perpetually. And perhaps never had so slight a thing so great an effect."[1] Every one watched the weathercock. All turned on the wind. Rumour ran riot. The Irish were coming. The French were coming. The Papists were planning a general massacre of Protestants. The kingdom was sold to Louis. Nothing was safe, and no one could be trusted. The laws, the Constitution, the Church —all were in jeopardy. But a deliverer would appear. He would come clad with power from over the seas to rescue England from Popery and slavery—if only the wind would blow from the east. And here one of Wharton's couplets, which nominally applied to Tyrconnel, gained a new and, indeed, an opposite significance.

> O, why does he stay so long behind?
> Ho! by my shoul, 'tis a Protestant wind.

The Protestant wind was blowing in the hearts of men, rising in fierce gusts to gale fury. Soon it would blow across the North Sea!

> "Lero, lero, lilliburlero!
> Lilliburlero, bullen-a-lah!"

sang the soldiers and peasants of England in endless repetition through those days, "singing," as its author afterwards claimed, "a deluded prince out of three kingdoms."

Sunderland and Jeffreys were at this moment in chief control of the Cabinet. The magnitude of William's preparations and the alarming state of feeling throughout England produced a complete change in their attitude. Confronted by impending invasion from abroad and by imminent revolt at home, these two Ministers, recently so pliable and so reckless, strenuously advised the King to reverse his whole policy. They abandoned at one stroke all the meticulous efforts to pack a Nonconformist House of Commons upon which infinite labour had been spent, and by which widespread irritation had been caused. Parliament must indeed be called without delay, and the King and his Government must face the fact that it would be Episcopalian in character. All further aggressive Catholic measures must be stopped, and a reconciliation made with the Church of England. The fact that this advice came from the two Ministers who had hitherto been the most hardy, and who were both, it seemed, committed beyond forgiveness to the royal policy and all the hatreds it had roused, was staggering. They must indeed

[1] Burnet, iii, 19.

have swept the King off his feet by their outburst of warning. He crumpled under their pressure and panic. Within a week he was persuaded that he could not make head against William of Orange without the support of the Church of England. To gain this support he must negotiate with the bishops. He must stoop to conquer—or even to escape.

On October 3, in a conference at which the Primate and most of the bishops were present, he agreed to abolish the Ecclesiastical Commission, to close the Roman Catholic schools, to restore the Protestant Fellows of Magdalen College, to put the Act of Uniformity into force against Catholics and Dissenters. Action was taken accordingly with the utmost speed. The Lord-Lieutenants who had been dismissed were invited to resume their functions. Their charters were restored to the recalcitrant municipalities. The bishops were begged to let bygones be bygones. The Tory squires were urged to take their old places in the magistracy. Too late! The adverse movement had slowly but at length gathered a momentum which was uncontrollable even by those who had started it. Moreover, Englishmen in those days were obstinate and tough. As the old Tory squire John Bramston observed when asked to return to the place from which he had been ejected, "Some would think one kick of the breech is enough for a gentleman."[1] Although many expressions of gratitude and loyalty were tendered by the leading persons affected by these concessions, there was not time for them to change the currents of public opinion, which flowed with increasing force. It was evident that this sudden, belated repentance was a proof only of the weakness of the Government in the presence of approaching peril.

Now the unhappy King began to realize that by his folly and Sunderland's advice he had lost all. At the end of October he dismissed his Minister for vacillation and lack of firmness in counsel. James had drawn upon himself the evils of all courses and gained the benefit of none. He had alienated his friends; he had united all his enemies. William was about to invade him. Louis had abandoned him. The Pope, for the sake of whose faith he had hazarded all, in aversion to whom his subjects were in revolt, was working with his enemies. Outside France he had not a friend or sympathizer in Europe; and France was marching away from him upon Germany. At home he had centred upon himself the anger of almost all the wealth and power and learning of the nation without winning

[1] *Autobiography of Sir John Bramston* (Camden Society, 1845), p. 326.

support from the popular masses. He had wounded Cavaliers without gaining Roundheads. He had estranged the Church without rallying the Chapel. Although Penn and the Nonconformist organizations had naturally supported his attempt to remove the penal laws, the great bulk of their followers remained vehemently hostile to Popery, and would rather endure maltreatment themselves than join in a Catholic crusade. The Catholic gentry whose wrongs had stirred his heart were now panicstricken by the plight into which he had led them. He was not even destined to go down fighting for the cause in which he so fervently believed. In the last few months of his reign he was compelled to desert the standard he had himself set up, and to try in vain to placate the furies he had aroused, by the sacrifice of all the objectives in whose pursuit he had aroused them.

Nor has the passage of generations vindicated his efforts for Catholic toleration. Had he joined the Catholic Hapsburgs and the Protestant princes in their war against the domination of France, he would have established with his own subjects a confidence and comradeship which might well have enabled him, if not to remove, at least gradually to neglect the enforcement of the Tests. Had he allowed the incomparable soldier whose gifts he had himself so long discerned to gain for him Protestant battles upon the Continent, the English people, relieved from their fear, might well have been generous to the co-religionists of the victorious prince who had served them well. So supple a part was beyond him, and, indeed, beneath him. Instead, he set in train a movement of events which made anti-Popery and a warming-pan the foundation of a dynasty, and riveted upon the English Catholics for more than a hundred and fifty years the shackles of the penal laws.

Chapter Seventeen

THE INVASION

1688—NOVEMBER

HITHERTO these chapters have usually dealt with several years; but now the pace of events is such that two' chapters can cover little more than a month. On October 19 William set out upon the seas. He had taken leave of the States-General in a speech that moved even the Amsterdammers to tears.

> He took God to witness that since he had been entrusted with the affairs of their commonwealth, he had never entertained a wish that was contrary to its interest. If he had erred, he erred as a man, his heart was not to blame. In his present enterprise he trusted to Providence; but if anything fatal should happen to him, to them he recommended his memory, their common country and the Princess his wife, who loved that country as she did her own. His last thoughts should be upon them and upon her.[1]

His small army was a microcosm of Protestant Europe—Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Prussians, English, and Scottish, together with a forlorn, devoted band of French Huguenots who had no longer any country of their own. They were embarked upon about five hundred vessels escorted by sixty warships—almost the entire Dutch fleet. The English Rear-Admiral Herbert led the van, and the Prince of Orange hoisted, together with his own arms, the flag of England, on which was embroidered his motto, "I will maintain," with the addition, "the Protestant religion and the liberties of England"; all of which was made good. Dalrymple has written of the feelings of the Dutch as they watched this impressive concourse of vessels quitting their shores:

> . . . some flattered with the grandeur of their republic, others reflecting with anxiety that their frontier on one side was in the hands of the ancient tyrants, and on the other, exposed to an army of foreign mercenaries, all the artillery of their towns carried off, only a few ships of war left in their harbours, and the whole strength of

[1] Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 188.

the republic sent, during the rigours of Winter, to depend upon the hazards of winds and seas, and the fortune of war.[1]

A violent gale scattered the fleet and cast it back upon the ports of Holland. One vessel, upon which no fewer than four companies of infantry were embarked, was driven on to the English coast and captured. The numbers of troops on this single vessel, together with the size of the fleet, gave the idea that William's army was four times as large as it was. But, anyhow, it had been driven back and ruined by the storms. James saw the finger of God. "It is not to be wondered at," he said, when he received the news at dinner, "for the Host has been exposed these several days." Convinced that the divine power and Holy Church had given him his son, he thought that they would also destroy his foes; and he dismissed Sunderland from his office as First Minister for being a faint-heart. But the new Secretary of State, Preston, a Protestant, renewed to him the advice of the fallen Minister. He must call a Parliament without manipulation and without delay.

Now this was a deadly matter for the King. No such Parliament could assemble in such a situation without calling in question not only the whole prerogative of the Crown, but, far graver, the *bona fides* of his son's birth. And here, by the mercy of God, was the hostile fleet scattered. Of course he refused. On this the Lord Chancellor Jeffreys abandoned himself to despair. "It is all naught," he exclaimed, with his customary profanity. "The Virgin Mary is to do all."

The reader will remember Churchill's friend and cousin George Legge, now Lord Dartmouth. When a Catholic admiral had brought the fleet to the verge of flagrant mutiny by celebrating High Mass upon his flagship, Dartmouth, a Protestant personally devoted to the King, had been placed in command to restore discipline. Dartmouth lay in the mouth of the Thames with a naval force which, though not capable of fighting a pitched battle with the Dutch fleet, could easily, if the occasion had served, have played havoc with that fleet, encumbered with its convoy. William's plans and, to a large extent, the fate of England depended on the wind. All preparations had been made by Danby, Devonshire, and Delamere for armed revolt in Yorkshire and Cheshire, and throughout the North men were being mustered, drilled, and as far as possible armed. It was believed that William would strive to land in the North, and thither

[1] Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 190.

considerable bodies of the royal troops were proceeding. But the winds decided otherwise, and William ran south under full sail. On November 3 he anchored, so as to regather his whole fleet, in the Straits of Dover, in full view of the crowded coasts of England and France. The same wind that carried him here prevented Dartmouth from coming out of the Thames in any formation fit for battle, even if the loyalty of his captains and their seamen would have undertaken it. When to doubt, disinclination, and inferior strength are added adverse weather conditions, the inaction of naval forces is to be expected. The English fleet followed tardily behind the invader, and the same Protestant wind which blew him back to Torbay when he had overshot it forced the pursuers, who had got as far as Portland, to take shelter at Spithead. On November 5 William landed at Torbay, on the coast of Devon. Carstares, the Scottish divine, who had endured the boot and the thumbscrew before escaping to Holland, reminded him that this was the joyous anniversary, long celebrated by the common people of England, of the detection of the Gunpowder Plot; and William said to Burnet, ever at his side, "What do you think of Predestination now?"

James was not at first unduly alarmed at the news. It was better that the invasion should have fallen on the western counties than upon Yorkshire. He hoped to pen William in the west, and to hamper his communications by sea. The troops which had been sent to Yorkshire were recalled to the south, and Salisbury was fixed as the point of assembly for the royal army. Meanwhile William established himself at Exeter and awaited the arrival of adherents. For ten days none came. Danby had expected him in Yorkshire. The West had learned its lesson after Sedgemoor, and no preparations for a rebellion had been made. William was disconcerted by this apparent apathy, and thought at first he was betrayed. However, gradually some notables arrived, and Sir Edward Seymour formed an association in his support. Most of the grievances set out in William's proclamation before he sailed had been redressed by James by the time he landed, and the issue appeared to narrow itself to the sole demand for a free Parliament. James declared that he could not call a Parliament while a hostile foreign army was in the country in the control of "a hundred voices"; and he left London for Windsor in order to avoid the pressure which the population of the capital endeavoured to exert upon him. In this lull the King still looked with confidence upon his Army, and it is thither we must turn for the next event.

Some confusion of thought is evident in the searing reproaches with which both parties and successive generations have disfigured Churchill's reputation and have singled him out to bear whatever there was of shame in the wonderful deliverance of which all stood sorely in need. No one has impugned the sincerity of his religious convictions or the wisdom of his political view. No one can dispute the proofs of his long attachment to both, or of the repeated declarations by which his position became well known to all whom it concerned. Few will urge that personal indebtedness to a prince requires behaviour contrary to a man's conscience and to the interests of his native land. Every one will repudiate the idea that Churchill—a fervent Protestant, a resolved opponent of French domination in Europe, and an adherent of our laws and Constitution as then known—should have lent his gifts and sword to the bloody task of forcibly converting his fellow-countrymen to Popery, and of setting up in England a despotism on the French model, by French arms and in French interests.

It follows, therefore, that Churchill was right to abandon King James. The only questions open are When? and How? Ought he to have quitted the King when he wrote his first letter of May 1687 to William of Orange? Surely not: the circumstances in question might never have come to pass. The King might yield to the increasing pressure brought upon him from all sides. He might reverse his policy. He did, in fact, reverse it. Was it, then, when he wrote his second letter to William, in August 1688, that he should have deserted James? But by this time he knew from Sunderland of the intended change of policy which even the most hard-bitten, self-seeking Ministers resolved to press upon their master, and of the probable summoning of a new Parliament chosen in the old way. Ought he, then, to have left the King's service, given up his commissions and appointments, and gone to his home or, if need be, to a prison, when James dismissed Sunderland at the end of October and withdrew the writs for a free Parliament? But by now William was on the seas. Trusting in the solemn written promises of leading Englishmen—among which Churchill's undertakings were the most explicit—he had launched out upon the hazardous enterprise to which they had called him. Ought Churchill, then, in November 1688 to have extinguished himself as a factor in the momentous events actually impending, and left William to look for his pledged aid in vain? Surely there is more shame in a breach of faith contrary to convictions than in a severance of loyalty in harmony with them.

A flight from responsibility was only treachery in another and an abject form.

It was a hideous situation into which he had been drawn by no fault of his own, by no unwise or wrongful action, by no failure of service, by no abandonment of principle. But it was a situation which had to be faced and dealt with calmly and sensibly in the manner most likely to minimize the public dangers and sufferings, and to procure a good result for his country and for himself. Moreover, in conspiracies and rebellions the penalties for failure are rightly so severe that all who are unluckily drawn into them have not only a vital need for themselves, but also a duty to others associated with them and to the cause at stake, to ensure success, and above all bloodless success, by forethought and every well-concerted measure. To lure, like Monmouth, associates and humble followers on fools' errands to their doom can find no defenders. Thus Churchill had to go through with his undertakings, and by such steps as were likely to win.

This was a dangerous time for James to have at the head of the host the Frenchman, Feversham, who had been so harshly lampooned round London and in all the garrisons after Sedgemoor. There was at the King's disposal Feversham's brother, the competent French general Roye. He certainly thought of offering the chief command to him. Roye, who had learned since his arrival of the intense feeling in the Army against France and French patronage, was well enough informed to put the suggestion aside. He could not, he said, command an army not one word of whose language he could speak. So Feversham remained Commander-in-Chief. All the more necessary was it to have Churchill almost on any terms at the royal headquarters. In the opinion of those rather loosely disciplined professional soldiers, with their brave and haughty society officers, he was without equal or rival the leading English general. The habit of soldiers to fix upon a leader who embodies to them a martial ideal and to obey him in a crisis has often been proved. Here was an hour when everything hung upon the temper of the troops. The only hope of inducing the Army, and especially its officers, to fight for the King was to give the impression that the best fighting man of English blood would give or be associated with the orders they received. The misgivings which James had owned when he superseded Churchill before Sedgemoor must have recurred to his mind in an aggravated form at this juncture. But what else was there to do? Accordingly on November 7 Churchill was promoted

Lieutenant-General with the command of a brigade, or, as we should now call it, a division, of the army concentrating at Salisbury.

Churchill could not consider this advancement as a mark of favour. It was, in fact, the hopeful appropriation of his military prestige to the royal cause at a moment when all title-deeds were called in question. Acceptance involved no assumption of new obligations on his part. In this important but subordinate position he had a seat at the councils of war and a voice in their decisions. He was not, however, in either nominal command or actual control of the Army. His opinion was invited; his influence and authority were invoked. He was saddled before the nation with the responsibility. But the King really leaned upon the two Frenchmen. They were immune from the passions which shook England. He could count on their fidelity however his own subjects might behave. Thus Churchill was at the same moment made to fill the public eye and kept under supervision and control. In the circumstances this was probably the best course open to the King.

During these heart-shaking days many alternative solutions of the nation's problem presented themselves. When the royal headquarters arrived at Salisbury, it might well be found that the mood of the troops was such that no battle could be fought; but that, on the other hand, a negotiation would be entered into, as afterwards happened, with the Prince of Orange and his invading army. At that time none of the English conspirators had contemplated the dethronement of the King, and William had carefully dissembled his ambitions. His small, solid army was only the steel tip of the spear of a British resolve. He could not conquer six million English with fifteen thousand men. The constable had arrived upon the scene of disorder. He was helpless without the support of public opinion and of sturdy, well-disposed citizens. It might well be that a parley between the chiefs on both sides would result in an agreement. James might become a limited monarch, permitted to exercise his personal religion in private, but compelled to govern with Parliamentary institutions, to preserve the Protestant character of England, and, as part of the League of Augsburg, to make war upon France. He might even be compelled to choose between having his son excluded from the succession or brought up a Protestant. Again, there might be a regency, with William as Mayor of the Palace, with James as a powerless but much respected Merovingian king, the succession at his death assured to his daughters, the Protestants

Mary and Anne. All these possibilities were still open when James left London.

The King had barely arrived at Windsor when disconcerting news was received. Lord Cornbury, eldest son of Lord Clarendon, an officer of the Royal Dragoons, found himself for a few hours in command of the troops assembling at Salisbury. Declaring that he had received orders for an immediate raid on one of William's advanced detachments, he set off with three regiments of horse, and marched them sixty miles to Axminster, whence after a brief halt he proceeded towards Honiton, professing to be about to attack the enemy. Young Berwick, who was going from Portsmouth to Salisbury to join the Army, filled with suspicion by this departure, set out immediately after Cornbury with other troops—an action of singular quality when he was only eighteen. Cornbury intended to carry the whole three regiments into the Prince's army. William, duly apprised, had set superior forces in motion to surround them, and the troops would certainly have been disarmed or, if possible, incorporated. But the officers were puzzled by the length of the marches and the obvious imprudence of the operation. They demanded the production of the orders. Cornbury, seeing himself detected, rode over to William with about two hundred men, while the rest of the brigade only extricated themselves with difficulty from the trap into which they were being led.

Cornbury's desertion was the first of the successive blows by which James was to learn that he could not trust his Army. Nevertheless, the incident cut both ways. Though Cornbury had deserted, the officers and soldiers had given a signal proof of their vigilant loyalty, and this military treason had miscarried. It was impossible to tell who among the officers of the Army could be trusted. It seemed certain that if they could all be trusted the Army would fight, and if it fought it would probably win.

The fact that Cornbury was intimate with his cousin the Princess Anne and was constantly at the Cockpit; the fact that the military arrangements had been so cast as to leave this young officer in chief command at Salisbury for some critical hours, and that he should have taken such audacious action, all pointed to a plot in which the superior chiefs of the Army, and Churchill above all, were engaged. There is no proof; but it may well be so. Certainly Churchill was trying to bring about the predominance of William without the fighting of a battle, and this would well have served for a preliminary move.

On the 18th Princess Anne sent to William a letter the outline of which had been evidently prepared beforehand.[1]

THE COCKPIT
November 18

Having on all occasions given you and my sister all imaginable assurances of the real friendship and kindness I have for you both, I hope it is not necessary for me to repeat any thing of that kind; and on the subject you have now wrote to me, I shall not trouble you with many compliments, only in short assure you, that you have my wishes for your good success in this so just an undertaking; and I hope the Prince [*i.e.*, her husband, Prince George of Denmark] will soon be with you, to let you see his readiness to join with you, who I am sure will do you all the service that lies in his power. He went yesterday with the King towards Salisbury, intending to go from thence to you as soon as his friends thought it proper. I am not yet certain if I shall continue here, or remove into the City; that shall depend on the advice my friends will give me; but wherever I am, I shall be ready to shew you how very much I am your humble servant.

On November 17 the King set out from Windsor to join the army at Salisbury. It was a strange party that fared with him to the wars. More than half were resolved, and most of these already pledged, to abandon him. Some had been for months actively conspiring with the invader. His own son-in-law, Prince George of Denmark, had actually agreed to the arrangement by which the Princess Anne should at the chosen moment leave London for William's camp. His own Household troops were honeycombed with disloyalty. His nephew, the Duke of Grafton, and nearly all his most capable officers, the leaders of many of his trusted regiments, were merely awaiting an opportunity to transfer their services to the enemy. Every decision, except those of hour and method, had been taken. Apart from his own Catholic communion and the French agents, there was no one upon whom he could depend. Even his fiercest partisans of Sedgemoor three short years before, men like Kirke and Trelawny, were now his foes. On all sides salutes and ceremony, unaffected respect and reverence for his person, and yet on all sides implacable treason, indistinguishable from public duty.

Among these men rode Churchill. None was more sure of himself than the newly promoted Lieutenant-General. His mind had long been made up, his pledge given, and his plans laid. Indeed, these evidences of design are the ground upon which censure has

[1] Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 249.

specially fastened. The elaborate, smooth-working preparations which are admired when they produce the march to Blenheim are repellent, though not less necessary, in a conspiracy. In London Sarah had her instructions about the Princess Anne, which she would fulfil with sure punctuality. Afloat, his brother George was working, with an ever-growing crowd of sea officers, to gain the fleet, and was himself about to carry his ship, the *Newcastle*, to William. Churchill himself was united in resolve and confederation with the principal nobles and functionaries. All—each playing his part wherever stationed—were taking day by day the steps which, should their designs miscarry, would cost them hearth and home and life itself. Ruin, exile, the scaffold—these were the stakes to which the compulsory game of politics had risen. They were already cast upon the board; there could be no withdrawal of them. Irrevocable! All grim, cold, doom-laden!

Chapter Eighteen

THE REVOLUTION

1688—NOVEMBER

AT this crisis in his fortunes King James could marshal as large an army as Oliver Cromwell at his height. Nearly forty thousand regular soldiers were in the royal pay and moving at the royal command towards Salisbury and the Dutch invader. But the Scottish troops, about four thousand strong, had only reached Carlisle, the bulk of the three thousand Irish were still beyond Chester, and at least seven thousand men must be left to hold down London. Still, twenty-five thousand men, or double the number of William's expedition, were around Salisbury when the King arrived on November 19. Here was the largest concentration of trained full-time troops which England had ever seen. What would they do?

This was the question which dominated the thoughts of all the leading figures who composed the King's headquarters or held the commands. There had been several vexatious delays and hitches in the assembly of the troops. The Secretary at War, Mr Blathwayt, is suspected by modern writers of obstruction. The Irish Catholic regiments, who were specially important, seemed to lag upon the road, and only came in one by one. The King and Churchill eyed each other, the sovereign in mute appeal, the servant in grave reserve: and both sought to penetrate by every channel open to them the secret of the Army. To the King, with his two French generals and the French Ambassador ever at his side, the aspect was obscure and dubious. To Churchill and the commanders banded with him it was highly disconcerting. Most of the officers were no doubt thoroughly disaffected. The Protestant regimental officers were divided and in evident distress. But the Papist officers and their men were ardent in their loyalty, and no one could be sure that the Protestant rank and file, if strongly gripped, were not capable of being led against the foreign foe or foreign deliverers. The least trustworthy regiments at James's disposal were those upon whom he should have been able to count the most. The Guards, the Dragoons

and Cavalry, those officers and men who habitually surrounded the Court, who had felt the mood of London, and were aware of the political issues at stake, were known to use mutinous language. But the main body of the Line at this juncture, though Protestant in sentiment, were still governed by their discipline and their uniforms.

Four anxious and oppressive days of reviews, inspections, and conferences followed. On November 21 the King proposed to visit his advanced covering troops, cavalry and infantry, who lay under Kirke about Warminster. The stresses through which he was passing induced in the unhappy monarch an obstinate bleeding of the nose. He was unable to ride forth. In after-days he regarded this affliction as a special interposition of Providence which alone saved him from being delivered by Churchill and Kirke into the hands of William. Berwick repeats this allegation in his *Memoirs*, and calls it "a pretty remarkable circumstance."[1] Jacobite scribes and pamphleteers have expanded it into a plot by Churchill and Kirke to murder the King, Churchill himself, they assure us, having undertaken to stab him in his coach.

Whatever may be charged against Churchill's morals, no one has impugned his sagacity, especially where his own interests were concerned. If he had murdered King James, William would have been able to reach the throne after enforcing merciless execution upon the criminals who had slain his beloved father-in-law. The greater the severity with which he treated them, the more becoming the auspices under which he would have succeeded. Indeed, it would be vital to him to avenge by every terror known to the law a crime by which he would himself have profited so highly. This accusation, which even Macaulay does not adopt, may be rebutted on these low but solid grounds and consigned to the rubbish heap of Jacobite mendacity.

We may dismiss also as an unwarrantable suspicion Churchill's alleged scheme to deliver the King into the hands of William. In dealing with these calumnies one after the other it is best to use the arguments which would most have appealed to those who bring them forth. The last thing that William desired was to have James on his hands. Nothing would have repelled the sympathy and public acceptance on which he counted more than the news that he had captured or stolen the King and was keeping him prisoner. All those forces that were demanding a free Parliament would have also demanded a free King. William, the adroit, masterly statesman,

[1] *Memoirs*, i, 31.

moving in an atmosphere which he and his English supporters understood, would never have made such a mistake, and Churchill, who knew the situation even better than William, was the last man to commit such a silly act.

It must be added that Churchill himself repudiated this charge as soon as he heard of it. Clarendon's diary[1] states:

> *December* 3, 1688. In the dining room [at Berwick, near Hindon[2]] I met my Lord Churchill. I told him what the King had told the Lords of his Lordship's design to deliver His Majesty to the Prince of Orange, if he had gone to Warminster. He denied it with many protestations, saying, that he would venture his life in defence of his person; that he would never be ungrateful to the King; and that he had never left him, but that he saw our religion and country were in danger of being destroyed.

It is natural that such charges should be made after the event about a man who had deserted his sovereign and benefactor by those who had suffered so woefully from his action.

Only in one respect does Churchill appear to have been curiously imprudent. He seems to have abandoned his usual reserved manner. The inscrutable dissembler, according to the Jacobite gossip, for once was indiscreet. An air of recklessness, of insolence, of flippancy even—so far as we know, unexampled in the rest of his life—is attached to his demeanour and procedure. He had, they tell us, "lolled out his tongue" at the Hyde Park review of the Army and "openly laughed" at the whole affair.[3] This behaviour had been seen and reported. He, Sunderland, and Godolphin, when the news of Lord Cornbury's desertion was received at Windsor, had been seen *unawares* "going hand in hand along the gallery in the greatest transports of joy imaginable."[4] At supper on the 20th he, with the Dukes of Grafton and Ormonde and others, had urged the newly arrived colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment and the Duke of Northumberland, of the Household Cavalry, to join the revolutionary party, heedless of the fact that, unless they were gained, as they were not, the conversation would be reported, as indeed it was. At the meeting of superior officers James appealed to their loyalty. Churchill and others repeated their usual assurances, but a deputation was sent immediately afterwards to Feversham to inform him that, however devoted they were to his Majesty's service, they could not

[1] Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, ii, 211, 214.

[2] This was a house belonging to Bishop Burnet in Wiltshire.

[3] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, pp. 184–185.

[4] Clarke, *Life of James II*, ii, 218.

in conscience fight against a prince who was coming over with no other design than to "protect the calling of a free Parliament for the security of their religion and liberties." The Jacobite writers declare that Churchill was the first to swear that he would "shed his last drop of blood" in the King's defence. This phrase finds confirmation in his own letters and conversations: but these also make it clear that he meant in defence of the King's person; not of his power, nor still less of his policy. Such equivocations were inevitable and common. They were the symptoms of violent times. A vast repudiation of allegiance united Englishmen of every rank and party. Those who, like Churchill, stood nearest the King until they quitted him had no other choice. But not often was treason less deceitfully veiled. It was in its last phase more like a political breach between Ministers than a plot against a sovereign.

It is recorded that at this same meeting the King ended his appeal to his officers by offering to allow any who could not serve him faithfully to go freely.

> He which hath no stomach to this fight,
> Let him depart; his passport shall be made
> And crowns for convoy put into his purse.

But this could be no real offer. Can anyone suppose that if Churchill or any other had risen from the council board and said, "I accept Your Majesty's offer, and am now going home, or, if I choose, to join the army of the Prince of Orange," he would have been suffered to leave the royal presence free or without a clash of arms? There are some offers which authority can make and may be wise to make, but which are in the nature of things utterly valueless to the weaker side. Here was no way out.

James, warned from many quarters, meditated Churchill's arrest. Feversham on his knees demanded it, declaring his disaffection patent. Churchill's incarceration at Portsmouth was debated. This was not a light matter to decide. His appointment had been advertised to the troops. The news of his arrest would have been not less injurious than his desertion. The shock to the Army would have been as great. So many were involved, so near, so intimate, so long-trusted and proved so faithful, that the unhappy sovereign knew not where to begin, nor, if he began, where to stop. On all sides his narrow circle of Papists, Irish, and Frenchmen encountered whisperings, averted eyes, or even cold shoulders and hostile looks. The King hesitated, delayed, put the matter off until the morrow.

We need not delve into a painful analysis of Churchill's feelings at this juncture. Lord Wolseley has drawn for us a harrowing picture of the moral and sentimental stresses through which his hero is supposed to have passed on the night of November 23, when he is represented as finally making up his mind to desert James, and how he must have balanced his duty and gratitude to his master and patron on the one hand against the Protestant cause upon the other. These well-meant efforts of a friendly biographer have certainly no foundation. All had, as we have shown, been settled long before. There never had been any process of weighing and balancing which side to take. The only difficulty had been to judge a ceaselessly shifting situation. But now all was simple. Policy and plans were settled; the last preparations had been made. The hour of action was always, to him, the least arduous of trials. That hour had now come.

A council of war was held on the evening of November 23. Churchill, supported by Grafton, when asked his opinion advised an advance towards the enemy, while Feversham and Roye were for retreat. The King accepted Feversham's opinion. Macaulay's account reads as if irritation at having his advice rejected, and the knowledge that this could only arise from distrust of his intentions, determined Churchill's course. This cannot be so. His may well have been the right advice to give on military grounds. There is a curious symmetry about his actions on many occasions which seems to range a correctness and justice of view on the event of the moment with his general designs. But it is equally arguable that he gave the right advice either because he knew the opposite course would be adopted, or because, if he had been taken at his word, that would have been convenient to his resolves. Every forward march would carry him nearer to William, would enable the two women for whose safety he was concerned, his wife and the Princess Anne, to make their escape more easily, and even his own decisive ride would be shorter. Once the Army was dispersed in its retreat, and the loyal were separated from the disloyal regiments, his arrest would be easy. All these matters are covered by the general relationship in which the chief actors stood to one another and by judgment upon the main issues.

We believe that Churchill stayed with the Army till the very last moment that he dared—and he dared much. By the end of the council on the 23rd he had convinced himself that the military plot had failed; that there was no prospect that the English commanders

would be able to go to the King and say in the name of the Army, "You must open negotiations with William, and you must call a free Parliament." They had used, so far as it was possible, all their influence upon the troops without decisive results, and brought themselves into extreme peril thereby. Nothing remained but to escape with their immediate retinues and followers.

Therefore, on this same night Churchill, the Duke of Grafton, and Colonel Berkeley, with about four hundred officers and troopers, mounted their horses and rode forth from their camp by Salisbury. Some time during the 24th they arrived at Crewkerne, about twelve miles from William's headquarters at Axminster, after a march of nearly fifty miles.[1] Churchill left the following letter to the King behind him:

> SIR,
>
> Since men are seldom suspected of sincerity, when they act contrary to their interests, and though my dutiful behaviour to Your Majesty in the worst of times (for which I acknowledge my poor service is much overpaid) may not be sufficient to incline you to a charitable interpretation of my actions, yet I hope the great advantage I enjoy under Your Majesty, *which I own I can never expect in any other change of government*,[2] may reasonably convince Your Majesty and the world that I am actuated by a higher principle, when I offer that violence to my inclination and interest as to desert Your Majesty at a time when your affairs seem to challenge the strictest obedience from all your subjects, much more from one who lies under the greatest personal obligations to Your Majesty. This, sir, could proceed from nothing but the inviolable dictates of my conscience, and a necessary concern for my religion (which no good man can oppose), and with which I am instructed nothing can come in competition. Heaven knows with what partiality my dutiful opinion of Your Majesty has hitherto represented those unhappy designs which inconsiderate and self-interested men have framed against Your Majesty's true interest and the Protestant religion; but as I can no longer join with such to give a pretence by conquest to bring them to effect, so I will alway with the hazard of my life and fortune (so much Your Majesty's due)

[1] All historical and biographical authorities have hitherto stated that Churchill was only accompanied by a handful of adherents. The following letter of William's seems to show that he took a considerable body of officers with him.

William to Bentinck (*November* 24/*December* 4, 1688)

"A gentleman has just arrived to convey me Lord Bristol's respects, who said that in passing through Crochorn [Crewkerne], he found there Lord Churchill with about four hundred horses [? horse], all officers who are coming to join us." (*Correspondence of William and Portland*, i, 61.)

[2] Author's italics.

> endeavour to preserve your royal person and lawful rights, with all the tender concerns and dutiful respect that becomes, sir, Your Majesty's most dutiful and most obliged subject and servant,
>
> CHURCHILL[1]

In the records at Blenheim a copy of this letter was found wrapped in another written by Prince George of Denmark, no doubt at the same time and under Churchill's advice. But the Prince, who, with Ormonde, deserted his father-in-law the next day, takes a view which extends beyond the island that had become his home; and for the first time we see how large a part the Protestant coalition against France played in the councils of the Cockpit.

"Whilst the restless spirits of the enemies of the reformed religion," wrote the Prince,

> backed by the cruel zeal and prevailing power of France justly alarm and unite all the Protestant princes of Christendom and engage them in so vast an expense for the support of it, can I act so degenerate and mean a part as to deny my concurrence to such worthy endeavours for disabusing of your Majesty by the reinforcement of those laws and establishment of that government on which alone depends the well-being of your Majesty and of the Protestant religion in Europe.

We have no doubt that these words expressed the deepest convictions of Churchill as well as those of the honest Prince who wrote them. James's ideal of England redeemed to the true faith, dwelling in definitely established absolute monarchy, advancing independently, but in royal alliance with the great King of France to the extirpation of Protestantism in Europe, shone for him clear and bright. In the mind of his servant there arose perhaps another picture more practical, not less dire, not less majestic. John Churchill saw the rise of Britain to the summit of Europe, curbing and breaking with the aid of William of Orange the overweening power of France. He saw himself, with the Dutchman if need be, or under England's Protestant Princess, advancing at the head of armies to the destruction of that proud dominion. He may even have seen at this early time the building up upon the ruins of the French splendour of a British greatness which should spread far and wide throughout the world and set its stamp upon the future.

To William, Churchill's arrival at Axminster was an enormous relief. Next to defeat his deadliest danger was victory. To avoid bloodshed, to avoid beating with foreign troops a British army in the field, was essential to his aim of securing the throne. He wel-

[1] Printed from the copy among the Blenheim MSS.

comed his new adherent with formal ceremony, and used his services to the best advantage.

It is said in the *Life of James II* that when Churchill arrived at William's headquarters Marshal Schomberg greeted him with the remark "that he was the first Lieutenant-General he had ever heard that had deserted from his colours." But William's manifesto to the British Army had said:

> We hope likewise that you will not suffer yourselves to be abused by a false Notion of Honour, but that you will in the first place consider what you owe to Almighty God and your Religion, to your Country, to your selves, and to your Posterity, which you, as Men of Honour, ought to prefer to all private Considerations and Engagements whatsoever.

We can well understand the Jacobite exiles putting such a taunt in the mouth of Schomberg, but it seems unlikely that William's confidant and second-in-command should at this critical juncture have indulged in such an ill-timed and inconsistent affront. After all, Schomberg himself had, on this same cause of Protestantism, changed sides not as a Lieutenant-General, but as a Marshal of France, and no man lay more exposed than he to a rejoinder in kind.[1]

It cannot be proved that the defection of so many important officers destroyed the possibility that the army would fight. If a regular purge had been made, as Feversham proposed, and sergeants promoted to fill all vacancies in the commissioned ranks, if Catholic or French officers had been placed in the key commands, and if the King himself had led his soldiers to battle, it is probable that a most fierce and bloody event would have followed. But Churchill's desertion, followed as it was by that of his own relations and closest servants, broke the King's spirit. When he saw that he could not even keep the Churchill who had been till now his intimate, faithful servant for nearly a quarter of a century, he despaired. He collapsed morally, and from that moment thought only of sending his wife and child to France and following them as soon as possible. It is this fact, and the personal elements that entered into it, that have made Churchill's desertion of James at Salisbury, although compulsory and inevitable, the most poignant and challengeable action of his life.

[1] Among the pictures which Marlborough collected at Holywell is one (now in Earl Spencer's possession) of Marshal Schomberg. It was painted specially for Marlborough, and it seems unlikely that he would have been at such pains to perpetuate in his own home the memory of a man who had offered him so blatant an insult on such a decisive occasion.

And now revolt broke out all over the country. Danby was in arms in Yorkshire; Devonshire in Derby; Delamere in Cheshire. Lord Bath delivered Plymouth to William. Byng, later Admiral, representing the captains under Dartmouth's command, arrived at his headquarters to inform him that the fleet and Portsmouth were at his disposal. City after city rose in rebellion. There was an eager rush of notabilities to greet the rising sun. By one universal, spontaneous convulsion the English nation repudiated James.

It was high time for the wives to do their part. Anne and Sarah had no mind to await the return of the indignant King. James sent orders to search both Churchill's houses, and to arrest Sarah. The Princess prevailed upon the Queen to delay the execution of this last order till the morning, and in the night the two women fled from the Cockpit. There are two theories upon this reasonable step: the first natural panic, and the second long-prepared design. Sarah in her account represents the Princess in a state of terror. She would rather "jump out of the window than face her father." Under her orders Sarah therefore made the best arrangements possible for immediate flight. "All was unconcerted." But this is not convincing. Anne knew that she herself was in no personal danger; her fears were for her beloved Mrs Freeman, who would certainly have borne the brunt of the royal anger. It had not been definitely settled whether when the crisis came Anne should leave the palace and seek protection in the City or whether she should try to join her husband in William's camp. The means of flight had been foreseen, and six weeks earlier a wooden staircase had been constructed from Anne's apartments to those of Sarah, which afforded an unguarded exit from the Cockpit. The Bishop of London was dwelling close at hand in concealment, and Lord Dorset, whose romantic nature was attracted by such a service, was in constant touch with him. When the orders for Sarah's arrest were followed by sure news that Prince George had quitted King James, the two ladies were able to escape. In the dead of night they descended the wooden staircase, found the Bishop and Lord Dorset awaiting them, waded through the mud of Pall Mall, in which Anne lost her shoe, to Charing Cross, and thence were carried in a coach to the Bishop of London's residence in Aldersgate. After a brief halt they set out at daybreak for Dorset's beautiful Copt Hall, in the heart of Epping Forest. When their flight was discovered, Lady Clarendon and Anne's waiting-woman raised so loud an outcry that the Princess had been carried off, probably to be murdered by Papists, that the Queen and her house-

hold had no small difficulty in pacifying their own Guards. All search for the fugitives was vain, and when the unhappy King reached Whitehall in the afternoon, he could but exclaim in despair, "God help me! Even my children have forsaken me!"[1]

From Copt Hall the Princess and Sarah proceeded without delay to Nottingham. The Bishop, who had discarded his clerical attire, escorted them, armed with sword and pistols, a veritable embodiment of the Church militant here on earth. At Nottingham Devonshire was already in arms at the head of the nobility and gentlefolk of Derbyshire organized into about a thousand horse. The Princess was received with royal honours and rapture by the rebels, and warmly welcomed by the townsfolk. A Court was improvised and a banquet held. In default of servants the dragoon volunteers waited upon the guests, and one of them, Colley Cibber, the poet and playwright, has left us an impression of Sarah which is so vivid and agreeable that it demands inclusion.

> We had not been many days at Nottingham, before we heard that the prince of Denmark, with some other great persons, were gone off from the king to the prince of Orange; and that the princess Anne, fearing that the king her father's resentment might fall upon her for her consort's revolt, had withdrawn herself in the night from London, and was then within half a day's journey of Nottingham; on which very morning we were suddenly alarmed with the news, that two thousand of the king's dragoons were in close pursuit to bring her back prisoner to London. But this alarm it seems was all stratagem and was but a part of that general terror which was thrown into many other places about the kingdom at the same time, with design to animate and unite the people in their common defence; it being then given out, that the Irish were everywhere at our heels, to cut off all the Protestants within the reach of their fury. In this alarm our troops scrambled to arms in as much order as their consternation would admit of; when, having advanced some few miles on the London road, they met the princess in a coach, attended only by the Lady Churchill (now duchess dowager of Marlborough), and the lady Fitzharding, whom they conducted into Nottingham through the acclamations of the people. The same night all the noblemen, and the other persons of distinction then in arms, had the honour to sup at her royal highness's table, which was then furnished (as all her necessary accommodations were) by the care and at the charge of the Lord Devonshire.
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> At this entertainment, of which I was a spectator, something very

[1] See, *inter alia*, Samuel Pepys' account in Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, Appendix V, p. 214; Clarke, pp. 226–227; *Conduct*, pp. 17–18; Lediard, pp. 53–54; Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, ii, 207.

particular surprised me; the noble guests at the table happening to be more in number than attendants out of liveries could be found for, I, being well known in the lord Devonshire's family, was desired by his lordship's maitre d'hotel to assist at it. The post assigned me was to observe what the lady Churchill might call for. Being so near the table, you may naturally ask me what I might have heard to have passed in conversation at it; which I should certainly tell you, had I attended to above two words that were uttered there, and those were "Some wine and water." These I remember came distinguished and observed to my ear because they came from the fair guest whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound all my senses were collected into my eyes, which during the whole entertainment wanted no better amusement than stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the fair object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding aspect of grace, struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not without offence remember it; such beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and shine into equal warmth the peasant and the courtier. . . . However presumptuous or impertinent these thoughts might have appeared at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret for full fifty years, may be now a good round plea for their pardon?[1]

We cannot think that Macaulay would have had any difficulty in blaming Churchill, whatever he did. As a Whig historian he is, of course, ardent for the Revolution. Of James he says:

During three years the King had been proof to all argument and to all entreaty. Every Minister who had dared to raise his voice in favour of the civil and ecclesiastical Constitution of the realm had been disgraced. A Parliament eminently loyal had ventured to protest gently and respectfully against a violation of the fundamental laws of England, and had been sternly reprimanded, prorogued, and dissolved. Judge after Judge had been stripped of the ermine for declining to give decisions opposed to the whole common and statute law. The most respectable Cavaliers had been excluded from all share in the government of their counties for refusing to betray the public liberties. Scores of clergymen had been deprived of their livelihood for observing their oaths. Prelates, to whose steadfast fidelity the King owed the crown which he wore, had on their knees besought him not to command them to violate the laws of God and of their land. Their modest petition had been treated as a seditious libel. They had been browbeaten, threatened, imprisoned, prosecuted and had narrowly escaped

[1] *An Apology for the Life of Mr Colley Cibber* (1740), pp. 57–59.

> utter ruin. Then at length the nation, finding that right was borne down by might, and that even supplication was regarded as a crime, began to think of trying the chances of war.[1]

Yet when Churchill obeyed this imperious call and took the action which enabled a good cause to triumph without the shedding of English blood, Macaulay denounces him with all the pungent rhetoric and elaborate scorn of which he is master. Now all rebellion is treason. To be guilty of treason is to be a traitor. Nineteen-twentieths of England, we are assured, were at this time traitors. Apparently this almost universal crime was only infamous in one man. For all the others Macaulay makes ample excuses; nay, they are glorified. The bishops, begged by the harassed sovereign for succour and accorded their every request, refused even to make a pronouncement against the invader. Fine spirit among the bishops! A regiment, asked to proclaim its readiness to fight for the enforcement of the Tests, threw down its arms. Patriotic feeling among the troops! Bishop Compton, taxed by James with having signed the invitation to William, avoided the lie direct by an ingenious subterfuge. "Sir," he said, "I am quite confident that there is not one of my brethren who is not as guiltless as myself in this matter." Questioned again the next day when all the others had denied, he said, "I gave your Majesty my answer yesterday." "The equivocation," says Macaulay, "was ingenious." He had "parried the question with an adroitness which a Jesuit might have envied." How clever!

Danby seized York. He spread a rumour that the Papists (of whom scarcely any existed in the neighbourhood) were up and were slaying the Protestants, and then rode to the rescue of the city at the head of a hundred horsemen crying, "No Popery! A free Parliament! The Protestant religion!" On this wave he disarmed the garrison and placed the governor under arrest. But what was this? Rebellion, treason, lying propaganda; sharp practice by any computation? No, says Macaulay, "Danby acted with rare dexterity." To ride into a peaceful city after having terrified the inhabitants with the shameful falsehood that their lives were in danger, and then to disarm the faithful officers and guardians of the King's peace, is described as "rare dexterity." The peers, who by scores had been conspiring, intriguing, and preparing for active rebellion against James for six months past, had all sworn the Oath of Allegiance on taking their seats in the Upper House. But here Macaulay shows us

[1] *History*, ii, 469–470.

how civic duty rightly overrides mere ceremonial obligations. He invites us to admire all these perjured nobles. They struck for England in a good cause without being hampered by the pedantry of scruple. The Lord-Lieutenants were the King's personal representatives, and special obligations of fidelity rested upon them. Yet how manly, how enlightened, how public-spirited they were in such large numbers to desert and abandon King James, once it was quite clear how the event was going! The oath of a Privy Councillor is more solemn and explicit even than the oath of a Lord-Lieutenant. Macaulay places his tinsel chaplets on the brows of every Privy Councillor who worked for James's undoing and expulsion.

From this universal commendation there is but one exception. In Churchill all resistance to James was shameful. Because he did not immediately go to James and, falling on both knees, declare, "I am opposed to Your Majesty, I am therefore a traitor, put me to death," he is a scoundrel—nay, more; he is the only scoundrel in England! What in all others was the hard but sacred duty of sustaining civil and religious liberty without regard to personal or party ties, in Churchill becomes the most infamous trick of the seventeenth century. What in all others was the broad heave of the British shoulders against insufferable burdens and injury, in him is the extremity of personal dishonour. What in all the rest is rightful, salutary action in a great crisis, in Churchill is "a dark conspiracy." But for Churchill's action, England would have been drenched with English blood—yet he alone is the villain. The event is glorious: the instrument dishonoured. The end was indispensable to British freedom: the means, we are assured, were disgraceful to Churchill's character. The relief and joy of the nation that an inevitable revolution was accomplished without the agony of civil war have resounded through the ages; and with them echo the censures upon the one man whose action, and whose only possible action, brought so great a blessing.

The King, having assembled such peers and Privy Councillors as were still in London, was advised by them to enter into negotiations with the Prince of Orange and to accord an amnesty to all who had joined him. He nominated Halifax, Nottingham, and Godolphin as his Commissioners to treat with William. He did not know that Halifax and Nottingham had both been privy to William's design. Neither did Halifax know that the King had no intention to treat, and was only using the negotiations as the means of gaining time to send his wife and child abroad and to follow them himself.

William, on his part, was in no hurry, and more than a week passed before the necessary safe-conducts were granted to the Commissioners, and they were conducted to his headquarters, which had now reached Hungerford. Meanwhile James had sent his infant heir to Portsmouth with orders to Dartmouth to send him at once to France. Dartmouth, for all his loyalty, refused to obey this fatal command, which he declared would render him "guilty of treason to Your Majesty and the known laws of the kingdom." "Pardon me therefore, Sir," he wrote from Spithead on December 3,

> if on my bended knees, I beg of you to apply yourself to other counsels; for the doing this looks like nothing less than despair to the degree of not only giving your enemies encouragement, but distrust of your friends and people, who I do not despair but will yet stand by you, in the defence and right of your lawful successor. . . . Pray, Sir, consider further on this weighty point: For can the Prince's being sent to France, have other prospect than the entailing a perpetual war upon your nation and posterity; and giving France always a temptation to molest, invade, nay hazard the conquest of England, which I hope in God never to see. . . .[1]

But James was not to be deterred. The baby Prince was brought back from Portsmouth, and on the night of December 9 the Queen, escorted only by Count Lauzun and Riva, an Italian gentleman, escaped, with her child, to Gravesend and thence to France. As soon as the King knew that his wife and son were safely off he prepared to follow them. Elaborate arrangements having been made to deceive the Court and the Council, the King stole from the palace an hour or two after midnight on December 11, crossed the river, and rode hard for the coast. He endeavoured to plunge his realm into anarchy. He threw the Great Seal into the Thames; and sent orders to Feversham to disband the Army, and to Dartmouth to sail with what ships he could for Irish ports. Dartmouth, stricken to the heart by his master's desertion of his post, placed the fleet under the orders of William. But Feversham, with reckless wickedness, scattered the soldiers, unpaid but not disarmed, upon the population. General consternation ensued. The King's Commissioners saw they had been befooled. The wildest rumours of impending Irish massacres spread through the land. The London mob sacked the foreign embassies, and every one seized arms in defence of hearth and home. A wild panic and terror, long remem-

[1] Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 246.

bered as "Irish Night," swept the capital. Undoubtedly a complete collapse of civil government would have occurred but for the resolute action of the Council, which was still sitting in London. With difficulty they suppressed the storm, and, acknowledging William's authority, besought him to hasten his marches to London.

But the very next day, while the Council was sitting, a poor countryman arrived at the door with an appealing message from the King. James had actually got on board a ship, but, missing the tide, was caught, mauled, grabbed, and dragged ashore by the Faversham fishermen and townsfolk, who took him for a Jesuit in flight. What followed is briefly and well told by Ailesbury, who gives unconsciously a picture which historians seem to have missed. Ailesbury had striven hard to dissuade James from his flight, and when the news that the fugitive had been intercepted at the coast was brought to the decapitated Council, he broke the prolonged silence by proposing that his Majesty should be invited to return forthwith to his post. Charged with this task, he set out by coach and a-horse to retrieve his master out of the hands of the mob at Sheerness. He was haughtily received by the royal captive. His high jack-boots prevented him from falling on his knees when entering the presence, and he could only bob his knee. Whereat James, unshaven, ill-fed, rounded up and put in the pound like an errant bull by the local townsfolk and seamen, but unshakably sure of his royal rights, remarked, "Ha! You were all Kings when I left London." To this reception at the end of his loyal and difficult journey through the turbulent, panic-stricken towns of Kent and by roadways infested with revolt and disorder Ailesbury—so he tells us—used some extremely plain language, to which his sovereign was graciously pleased to hearken. He then proceeded to collect some victuals, bake the best bread possible in the circumstances, and ask the King whether he would not dine in state. His Majesty signified his pleasure; the local dignitaries and some of the populace were admitted wonder-struck to the miserable dwelling, and the faithful Gentleman of the Bedchamber, jack-boots notwithstanding, managed (by holding on to the table) to serve him on the knee; thus restoring public confidence and decorum. At intervals throughout the day fragments of the disrupted royal household arrived in Faversham. The barber, with the valets and clothes, arrived in the afternoon; the cooks a little later. The Board of Green Cloth was on the spot by dusk; the royal saddle-horses came in during the

night, and a troop of Life Guards were reported approaching the next morning. Thus the Court was reconstituted, though in a somewhat skeleton state.

Ailesbury stayed by his master thenceforward. He arranged for a hundred troopers of the Life Guards to be drawn up in single file to encourage him with their acclamations. He persuaded James to drive through the City of London, where the people, perplexed and dumbfounded by the awful event of his flight, received him with relief and almost enthusiasm. He accompanied James from Whitehall when, at William's order, he was escorted by the Dutch Guard down the river to Rochester. He shared with him the peril of the "hideous shooting of the bridge" on the swift, outflowing tide. Once this danger was overcome, the royal party picnicked agreeably in the boats, the King passing food and wine to the Dutch captain of the convoying flotilla.

Ailesbury abode with the King at Rochester, and again endeavoured to prevent his leaving the island. William, who had been profoundly inconvenienced by his return and longed for his fresh departure, caused hints to reach him that his life was in danger. James, no physical coward—indeed, as we have seen, a proved veteran by sea and land—was cowed to his marrow by the overwhelming tide of adverse opinion and the wholesale desertion and repudiation of almost all on whom he had counted. After some days of painful suspense the unhappy man escaped to the river by the back door, which the Prince of Orange had taken pains to leave unguarded, and this time succeeded in leaving English soil for ever. We are told in his so-called memoirs that he expected he would be sent to the Tower, "which no King ever quitted except for his grave," and he felt it his sacred duty to preserve his royal person from such outrageous possibilities.

But though the downfall and flight of this impolitic grandson of Henry of Navarre were at the time ignominious, his dignity has been restored to him by history. Heredity, fatalism, the besetting Stuart infatuation of obstinacy, his stern religious faith, his convinced patriotism according to his lights, all combined to lead him to disaster. He was doomed alike by his upbringing, his office, and his nature. His fixed domestic ideas made an effective foreign policy impossible. His Catholic convictions left him a stubborn anomaly upon a Protestant throne. He was at once a capable administrator and a suicidal politician; a man virtuous in principle and gross in practice; a personage equally respectable and obnoxious. Yet he

carried with him into lifelong exile an air of royalty and honour which still clings to his memory.

On the afternoon of December 23 William learned that the King had fled, and felt himself in one form or another undisputed master of England. He lost no time in taking the step for the sake of which he had come across the water. The French Ambassador was given twenty-four hours to be gone from the island, and England was committed to the general coalition against France.

Chapter Nineteen

MARLBOROUGH AND WILLIAM

1688–1690

THE Prince of Orange had now become the effective military ruler of his new country; but there was no lawful Government of any kind. The Convention Parliament—assembled on the authority of the revolutionary junta—dived lustily into academic disputes, and the differences between the Whigs and the Tories, temporarily merged in their common danger, soon reappeared. Was the throne vacant? Could the throne ever be vacant? Was there a contract between the King and the people which James had broken? Had he abdicated by flight, or merely deserted? Could he be deposed by Parliament? Arising from all this, should William become Regent, governing in the name of the absent James? Should Mary become Queen in her own right? Had she not, in view of the virtual demise of the Crown, in fact already become Queen? Or should William be made sole King; or should William and Mary reign jointly; and if Mary died, should Anne forthwith succeed, or should William continue to reign alone as long as he lived? Both Houses, both parties, and the Church applied themselves to these lively topics with zest and without haste.

William's aim from the first was to obtain the crown of England for himself alone. Until James's flight he would have been content with any solution which brought England into the coalition against France; but thenceforward he saw no obstacle to his full ambition. Years before Burnet had earned William's gratitude by inducing Mary to promise, should she succeed her father, that they should be joint-sovereigns. The Stadtholder now flew higher still. He intimated first that he would not be Regent, governing in the name and against the will of a dethroned sovereign with whom he would certainly be at war. "He had not," he said, "come over to establish a Commonwealth or be a Duke of Venice."[1] Rather than that he would return to Holland. Mary's rights were espoused by Danby, who had been disappointed that William had not landed in

[1] Foxcroft, *Halifax*, ii, 203.

Yorkshire, and that his own share in the event had not been larger. He proposed that Mary should be Queen. William disposed of this idea by putting it about that he would not be "his wife's gentleman-usher." Through Bentinck, his Dutch confidant, he bid high for the sole kingship, with his wife but a consort. Burnet was staggered by this ingratitude to Mary. The idea of supplanting her in her lawful and prior rights caused widespread anger. William's appetite found its only prominent supporter in Halifax. It was, in fact, the first shock to his popularity in England.

Churchill steered a middle course, at once independent and judicious, through these controversies. Like most of the Tories, he could not vote directly for the dethronement of James; but neither would he actively support the Tory proposal for a regency to which William objected so strongly. He stayed away from the critical division on January 29, and a regency was voted down by fifty-one to forty-nine. He voted later that James had "deserted" the throne and had not "abdicated"; but when the Lords gave way to the Commons and agreed that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be joint sovereigns, he supported their decision. Sarah, under her husband's advice, persuaded Anne to surrender in favour of William her right to succeed to the throne on Mary's death. Thus William gained without dispute the crown for life. This was a service of the first order, and probably counted in William's mind even above the desertion at Salisbury which had prevented a battle. From the very beginning, however, and even on this subject, the King showed a definite coolness towards the Churchills. On Halifax suggesting to him that Lord Churchill "might perhaps prevail with the Princess of Denmark to give her consent" he bridled, saying, "Lord Churchill could not govern him nor his wife as they did the Prince and Princess of Denmark." Halifax, who recorded this conversation, noted in William "a great jealousy of being thought to be governed," and added, "That apprehension will give uneasiness to men in great places. His dislikes of this kind have not always an immediate effect as in the instance of Lord Churchill," but "like some slow poisons work at a great distance of time."[1]

William accepted the arrangements made by Parliament with good grace. He confirmed Churchill in his rank of Lieutenant-General. He employed him practically as Commander-in-Chief to reconstitute the English Army. In this important task Churchill's military knowledge and organizing capacity had full scope. Schomberg, who

[1] Foxcroft, *Halifax*, ii, 203.

presided over the process on William's behalf, remarked laconically to Ailesbury, "My lord Churchill proposes all, I am sent for to say the general consents, and Monsieur Bentinck is the secretary for to write all."[1] The Dartmouth Papers tell the same tale a year later. "Lord Churchill is the greatest man next to Marshal Schomberg in the army affairs."[2] Other extracts show that Churchill did not at this time forget his old friend Legge. "Lord Churchill has already acquainted the Prince how useful a minister in the management of affairs you are."[3] But Dartmouth soon fell upon evil days, and died in the Tower. At the coronation in April Churchill was created an earl. The reader will recall Eleanor Drake's connexion by her sister's marriage with James Ley, first Earl of Marlborough. The third Earl had fallen in battle at sea with the Dutch in 1665, and the title so honourably borne had since 1680 been extinct. We can understand why Churchill chose it for his own.

In May war was formally declared against France; and as William was detained in England and later embroiled in Ireland, Marlborough led the English contingent of eight thousand men against the French in Flanders. The world conflict which had now begun only gradually reached its full intensity. The French, who had a magnificent army, found eventually in Luxembourg a commander not unworthy to be named with Condé and Turenne. The allies ranged themselves along a 300-mile crescent from the Upper Rhine to the Belgian coast. They were more numerous than the French, and able everywhere to assume the offensive. Four separate armies advanced simultaneously, but in the leisurely fashion of those days, against the French frontiers. In the north the Spaniards and Dutch moved through Belgium towards Courtrai under the Prince of Vaudemont. Next in the line and farther south the Dutch and Swedes, together with the English contingent, sought, under the command of the Prince of Waldeck, to operate between the Sambre and the Meuse. Beyond the Ardennes the Prussians and North Germans under the Elector of Brandenburg aimed at the capture of Bonn, upon the Rhine; and farther south still the forces of the Empire, under the able leadership of the Count of Lorraine, struck at Mainz. A modest but definite measure of success rewarded all these operations. Lorraine took Mainz and, moving down the Rhine, helped the Elector to capture Bonn. The Prince of Vaudemont

[1] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 245.

[2] P. Frowde to Dartmouth, January 3, 1690, Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 249.

[3] P. Bowles to Dartmouth, December 1, 1688, *ibid.*, 242.

possessed himself of Courtrai and forced the French to fall back upon strong lines between the Lys and the Scheldt. But the only real fight of the year belonged to the credit of the Prince of Waldeck and the army in which the English served.

When Marlborough landed at the end of May he found the British troops in very poor condition, and the three months which elapsed before active operations began were indispensable to their training and discipline. He made a great improvement in both. We have a letter from him to Mr Blathwayt, who had continued to be Secretary at War, from Maestricht in which he says:

> I desire you will constantly let me have what passes in Ireland. . . . I desire you would send me over a copy of the oath that Monsieur Schomberg gave to the officers about their never taking nor giving money for their employment, because I am resolved to give the same oath here.

He requested William's decision upon whether he would have the Regiments of Foot learn the Dutch exercise or else continue the English.[1] He drilled his men sedulously, saw to their pay, food, and clothing with that meticulous housekeeping from which his armies always profited, and repressed abuses of all kinds. In a few months the British force, from being the worst, was recognized as the best managed in Waldeck's army of about thirty-five thousand men.

The Prince of Waldeck was one of William's trusted leaders. His prolonged experience had made him a pedant in the art of war. Indeed, it was to him, as to most of the commanders at this time on both sides, very like a game of chess. The gambits and defences of each were well known to all players of a certain professional standing. As long as no obvious mistakes were made nor any serious risks run, no marked change in the situation was likely. Here a fortified town might be taken, there a small area of hostile country might be used as feeding-ground. But if the conventional countermeasures were taken by the opponent, these small prizes were placidly relinquished, and the armies continued to face and manœuvre against each other with the decorum of performers in a minuet. For this sedate warfare Waldeck's age of sixty-nine was no disqualification. He soon saw the improvement in the quality of the British, and took a liking to Marlborough.[2] On July 3 he wrote to William

[1] Add. MSS., 21506, ff, 96, 98.

[2] See summaries of his letters to William in *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1689–90. William to Marlborough, July 6/16, 1689: "J'ay bien de joye d'aprendre que vous vous accordez si bien avec le Prince de Waldec." (Blenheim MSS.)

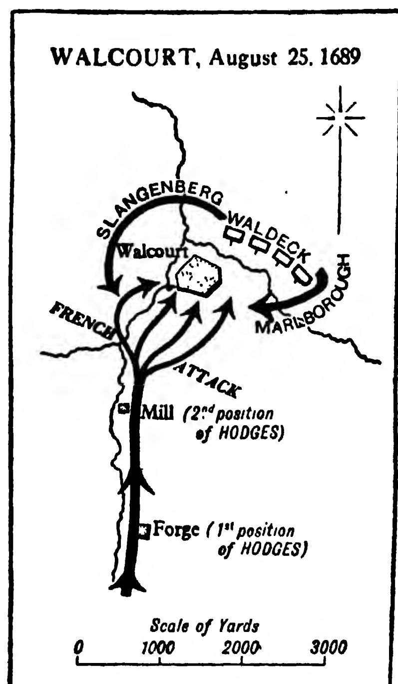
that he could not "sufficiently praise the English"; and on the 26th that the English numbered six thousand foot and five hundred horse, "the whole so well ordered that I have admired it, and I can say that Monsieur Milord Marlbrouck and the Colonels have shown that their application has had a good effect." On August 24, having crossed the Sambre, he stood before the small ancient town of Walcourt, which rises on its hillock from an undulating and wooded landscape. Here he was well satisfied to live upon the enemy's country, sending his foraging parties out to gather supplies.

Marshal d'Humières, who commanded the opposing French army, felt bound to resent this trespass. D'Humières, though also a well-trained professional, had an irritable streak in his nature. He was said to have owed his appointment to the admiration which Louvois cherished for his wife. He marched with becoming haughtiness to expel the intruders, and on the morning of August 25[1] fell upon the allied foraging parties and outposts about two miles south of Walcourt. It happened that Marlborough was in charge of these petty operations, and that the 16th Regiment of Foot (now the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment), together with some three hundred Dutch horse and dragoons, formed their support. At nine o'clock the approach of large French forces was noticed, and soon after it was realized that these were the vanguard of the whole French army. Cannon were fired to recall the foragers and alarm the camps. Meanwhile the English regiment barred the advance of the French. They were heavily attacked; but under Colonel Hodges offered a stubborn resistance. For nearly two hours these six hundred English infantry prevented the hostile advance. When Marlborough learned that all was in readiness in Waldeck's army, he directed them to withdraw to the higher ground on the east of the hill of Walcourt, where other British troops and several batteries had come into line. The manner in which this single battalion effected its orderly retreat in the closest presence of very powerful French cavalry was a foretaste of the qualities which Europe was taught reluctantly to recognize in the English Army.

Meanwhile the Prince of Waldeck had occupied the town of Walcourt and had posted his army in position mainly on its eastern side. All the foragers had returned to camp, and d'Humières could take his choice whether he wanted a battle or not. It was now noon. The ground was not at all favourable to the French, but d'Humières seems to have been inflamed by the sharp fighting in which his

[1] Misdated by Wolseley the 27th and by Macaulay the 5th. See p. 281, n. 3.

vanguard had been engaged and did not take the trouble to reconnoitre. He ordered a strong column of French infantry, including eight battalions of the French Guard, to carry the town of Walcourt by assault. This was certainly a very difficult task to undertake voluntarily. The defences of the town were antiquated, and the walls had crumbled in several places. Still, it stood upon a hill, was partly covered by a river, and was girt about with a strong field army. Nevertheless, the French made a most determined attack upon the town, and although raked by Marlborough's flanking batteries from the eastern heights as they approached, they very nearly mastered its defenders. These were, however, reinforced by two battalions under the English Colonel Tollemache. Although the French Guard strove to burn the town gates, and everywhere fought with determination, they could make no progress, and the greensward around the ramparts was strewn with the bodies of five hundred of their men. D'Humières saw himself forced to widen the battle. He threw in his whole army in an improvised attack upon the allies' right, which had by now been extended west of Walcourt. This was the moment for Waldeck's counter-stroke. At six o'clock Slangenberg led the Dutch infantry forward from the western side. Simultaneously Marlborough attacked from the eastern side of the town. Placing himself at the head of the Life Guards and Blues, and supported by two English regiments, he charged upon the French right flank, inflicting very grave injuries upon the troops already unduly tried. The French cavalry was not only numerous, but was led by that same Villars of whom we have heard twenty years before at the siege of Maestricht, and whom we shall meet twenty years later at Malplaquet. Villars saved the French infantry from destruction, and d'Humières was able to withdraw his army as the night fell with a loss of six guns and two thousand of the flower of the French foot.



As the casualties of the allies were about three hundred, the action wore the aspect of a victory. Feuquières, the French military critic, remarks severely "that this combat should never be cited save as an example to avoid."[1] D'Humières' military reputation received a fatal blow, and in the next campaign he was superseded by Luxembourg.

The Prince of Waldeck rejoiced in his good fortune, nor was he ungenerous to those who had contributed to it. "All our troops," he wrote to the States-General, "showed great courage and desire to come to battle, and the English who were engaged in this action particularly behaved themselves very well."[2] To William he wrote, "Colonel Hodges and the English did marvels and the Earl of Marlborough is assuredly one of the most gallant men I know."[3] These comments are confirmed by the French accounts, which mention especially the Life Guards and two English battalions under the command of "Lieutenant General Marlbroch." Waldeck wrote further to William that "Marlborough *in spite of his youth*[4] had displayed in this one battle greater military capacity than do most generals after a long series of wars." William, being, like Marlborough, only thirty-nine himself, was not perhaps deeply impressed by this reference to the infirmities of youth. He wrote, however, in handsome terms to Marlborough:

> I am happy that my troops behaved so well in the affair of Walcourt. It is to you that this advantage is principally owing. You will please accordingly accept my thanks and rest assured that your conduct will induce me to confer on you still further marks of my esteem and friendship on which you may always rely.[5]

Marlborough was made Colonel of the Royal Fusiliers, a regiment armed with a light musket called a fusil and employed in the special defence of the artillery. Such appointments were lucrative, and the fact that this regiment was under the Master-General of the Ordnance might encourage Marlborough to hope that this financial plum, so necessary for the support of his earldom, would some day fall into his hands. Walcourt was the only recognizable success which greeted the Dutch and English peoples in the year 1689. Thus the new King's reign opened auspiciously for him.

It happened, however, that during the summer a dispute had

[1] *Memoires de Feuquières*, iii, 262.
[2] *London Gazette*, No. 428 (1689).
[3] S.P., King William's Chest 5, No. 96, letter dated August 25.
[4] Author's italics.
[5] William III to Marlborough, September 3/13, 1689 (Blenheim MSS.).

arisen between the King and Queen Mary on the one hand and Anne and her husband on the other, the brunt of which fell entirely on the Churchills. Up to this point all had been love between the two royal sisters, with the added thrill of conspiracy against their father. Till now Sarah had seemed to be the bond of union between them. The cordial letters which Mary wrote to her have often been printed. "Your friendship makes my sister as dear to you as to me," the Princess of Orange had written on September 30, 1688, "and I am persuaded we shall ever agree in our care for her, as I believe she and I should in our kindness to you, were we near enough to renew our acquaintance." But all things change with time, and many in a very short time. Sarah has reason on her side when she contends that her influence upon the succession settlement in the event of Mary's dying before William was used in the general interest rather than from any unworthy eagerness to ingratiate herself or her husband with the new sovereigns. For soon afterwards came the question of the Parliamentary grants to the Royal Family. And here began the rift.

Anne, who had agreed willingly to the sacrifice of inestimable reversionary rights, naturally wished, especially in the event of her sister's death, to have an independent income granted directly to her by Parliament. William resented this desire, and his wife championed his view. Both thought, moreover, that £30,000 a year was ample for the Princess's household; indeed, William expressed his wonder to Lord Godolphin how the Princess could spend so much, "though," adds Sarah, "it appeared afterwards that some of his favourites had more." Considering that Anne already had £20,000 a year settled upon her for life by Parliament, this was not generous treatment of a Princess who had voluntarily resigned an important contingent claim upon the crown. The Cockpit household took care that Parliament was informed of the dispute, and, by way of having something to concede, suggested £70,000 as an appropriate figure. It was soon apparent that they had strong support. Mary sent for Anne and advised her to trust herself entirely to the King's gracious bounty. Anne replied sedately that "she understood her friends had a mind to make her some settlement." "Pray what friends have you," rejoined the Queen, "but the King and me?" A nasty family dispute about money matters; and not only upon money matters, but status!

Anne was found to have the House of Commons on her side.

The Marlboroughs steadfastly espoused her interest. While John was fighting at Walcourt Sarah had actively canvassed the Tory Party. An independent position for the Princess Anne was held in Parliament to be essential to the Revolution settlement. Tempers rose high on both sides. Every form of pressure from ugly threats to dazzling bribes was put upon Sarah to persuade her mistress to a compromise. The figure was no longer in dispute. Shrewsbury himself undertook to win, through Sarah, Anne's acceptance of £50,000 from the King. Sarah was impervious. After what the Cockpit had seen of the royal generosity, they insisted upon a Parliamentary title. Sarah stood by her mistress and her friend. She cast away for ever the Queen's favour; and this at a time when there was no reason to suppose that Anne would outlive Mary. There is no doubt that Marlborough guided the helm and faced the blizzard. But this was no Quixotism. It was his private interest that the matter should be settled so; it was his duty to the Princess; it was also the public interest, with a foreign king on the throne, and an ex-king claimant, that an English princess, heir designate, should be independently established. Again we see in Marlborough's story that strange coincidence of personal and national duties at crucial times. The new sovereigns had to accept a definite, public defeat, and the House of Commons voted the Princess Anne a life grant of £50,000 a year.

Marlborough had his own position in the country and with the King. But the Queen henceforward pursued Sarah with keen hostility, and this she soon extended to Sarah's husband. She blamed Sarah for the estrangement which had sprung up between herself and her once dearly loved sister. Repeatedly she urged Anne to remove this obstacle to their natural affection. Anne, forced to choose between the Queen and Sarah, made it plain with all the obstinate patience of her nature that she would stand by her friend, as her friend had stood by her. This choice, so deliberate and unshakable, was deeply wounding to her sister. Perhaps all this had as much to do in the future with Marlborough not getting the commands to which by rank and capacity he was entitled as had the exigencies of William's political system or his proclivities for Dutchmen. At any rate, it lay and lurked behind the daily routine of war and government.

But we cannot convict Sarah of misbehaviour in this matter. Neither she nor her husband would yield the interests of the Princess Anne to win the favour of the new reign. On the lowest ground

they looked farther ahead than that, and on the highest ground they stood by their patrons. All their moves were made with great good sense, and in this case with right feeling. They helped the King in the constitutional settlement; they withstood him when the interests of the Princess they served were unfairly assailed.

King William was neither the first nor the last statesman to underrate the Irish danger. He had at first regarded its existence as a good pretext for obtaining a substantial army from Parliament, and had neglected Tyrconnel's overtures for a settlement. By May, when the European campaign was beginning on all the fronts of France, he found a serious war on his hands in Ireland. James had arrived in Ireland, was welcomed as a deliverer, and now reigned in Dublin, aided by an Irish Parliament and defended by a Catholic army of a hundred thousand men, of whom half were organized by French officers and furnished with French munitions. The Irish army was further sustained by a disciplined French contingent. Soon the whole island except the Protestant settlements in the North was under Jacobite control. While William looked eastward to Flanders and the Rhine, the eyes of his Parliament were fixed upon the opposite quarter. When he reminded Parliament of Europe, they vehemently directed his attention to Ireland. Thus drawn by contrary calls, the King made the time-honoured mistake of meeting both inadequately. He had sent Marlborough to command the British contingent of eight thousand of the best British troops under the Prince of Waldeck in Flanders; later he sent Schomberg and Ginkel with newly raised regiments to Ulster. The European campaign was unfruitful, and the Irish disastrous. The year 1689 ended with James established in Ireland, with Schomberg's troops wasted by disease and reduced to the defensive, and the Protestant North in extreme distress and peril. Had William used his whole strength in Ireland in 1689 he would have been free to carry it to the Continent in 1690. But the new year did not renew the choices of the old. He found himself compelled to go in person with his main force to Ireland, and by the summer took the field at the head of thirty-six thousand men. Thus the French Government, at the cost only of five thousand troops, a few hundred extra officers, and moderate supplies, diverted the whole power of England from the main theatres of the war. Had Louis backed the Irish enterprise with more force, he would have gained even larger rewards.

William left the government in the hands of Queen Mary, assisted

by a council of nine, four Whigs and five Tories,[1] of whom Marlborough was one, besides being at the same time Commander-in-Chief. A most critical situation now developed. The Prince of Waldeck was encouraged by the memory of Walcourt to lay a trap for the French. But Luxembourg was no d'Humières, and at the battle of Fleurus in June he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the allies. At the same time the French fleet was stronger in the Channel than the combined fleets of England and Holland. Admiral Herbert (now Earl of Torrington) was none the less ordered to bring them to battle. On June 30/July 10 he was defeated in a sea-fight off Beachy Head, the brunt of the action falling upon the Dutch. This was, according to Mahan, "the most conspicuous success the French have ever gained at sea over the English." It was said in London, "The Dutch had the honour, the French the advantage, and the English the shame." The French, under the energetic Tourville, now enjoyed the command of the sea. They could land an invading army in England; they could prevent the return of William from Ireland. The council of nine over which Queen Mary presided had to face an alarming crisis.

They were sustained by the loyalty and spirit of the nation. The whole country took up what arms could be found and feverishly organized the home defence. With a nucleus of about six thousand regular troops and the hastily improvised forces of the nation, Marlborough stood ready to resist an invasion for which an excellent French army of over twenty thousand men was available. William's decisive victory at the Boyne on July 1/11 threw James out of Ireland and back to France; but the English peril continued at its height. James implored Louis to give him an army for invasion, and there seems no doubt that in July and August 1690 this was the right strategy for France. Had it been adopted Marlborough's task would have been peculiarly difficult. He would have had to face the disciplined veterans of France with a mere handful of professional troops aided by brave but untrained masses, ill-armed and with hardly any experienced officers. Such a problem was novel to the military art of those days; but it was not necessarily beyond the resources of his flexible genius. He would probably 'have thought of something,' and our history might have dwelt with pride upon a

[1] Besides Marlborough the members were Danby (now Marquess of Caermarthen), Lord President; Godolphin at the Treasury; Nottingham and Henry Sidney (now Viscount Sidney), Secretaries of State; together with Russell, Devonshire, Monmouth (afterwards Earl of Peterborough), and Sir John Lowther (afterwards Lord Lonsdale).

battle of Dorking or a battle of London as the first example of the power of hardy, stubborn yeomanry and militia supported by the population against regular forces. But James's appeals were disregarded by the French King. His sympathy for the sufferings of the fugitive from the Boyne was more marked than his admiration of his capacity. The anxious weeks of July and August slipped away, with no more injury or insult to England than the burning of Teignmouth by French troops. The French fleet was dismantled and laid up for the winter, and the English and Dutch fleets were refitted and again at sea. Thus the French opportunity was lost.

Torrington's conduct at the battle of Beachy Head drew upon him the fury of the King, the Council, Parliament, and the nation. He was instantly removed from his command, arrested, and tried for his life before a naval court. His tactics have not lacked defenders. He was unanimously acquitted by the court-martial, but their verdict could not save his reputation or restore his command.[1]

When the news of the naval defeat had been received at Queen Mary's council board, Marlborough and Admiral Russell were

[1] One of King William's letters to Marlborough at this time deserves publication.

"AU CAMP DE CRUMLIN
"9/19 *de Juillet* 1690

★"Vous pouvez facilement croire combien j'ay este touche du Malheur qu'est arive a ma flote je doute fort que Mr Torrington poura se justifier de sa conduite, J'espere que l'on faira tous les efforts possible pour la remettre bien tost en Mer. Je n'aprehende pas beaucoup une descente car selon les informations les ennemis n'ont point des trouppes sur leur Flote. Et j'y suis confirme par les lettres que nous avons pris lesquels vous seront communiques, mais ils pouront bien envoyer en ces Mers un detachement de fregattes qui nous incomoderoit fort. Et nous aurons bien de la piene d'empescher qu'il ne nous brulent nos Vesseaux de Vivres et de Transport, Je suis tres aise des assuerances que vous me donnes d'affection des Trouppes et du vostre. Apres les adventages que j'ay emporte icy je croi que les Malintensiones en Angletere n'auseront se remuer, soiez asseure de la continuation de mon amitie.

"WILLIAM R.

"Je n'aures plus besoin des deux Batt des Gardes Et mesme si vous aviez encore besoin de Trouppes je poures bien tost vous en envoyer pourveu que le passage soit libre.

"Ce que vous m'avez ecrit il y a quelque temps que Sr J[ohn] G[uise] m'auroit dit, je vous asseure qu'il ne m'a jamais parlé de vous ny que je n'ay rien houi de ce que vous m'avez mande."

This last sentence was in answer to a letter of Marlborough dated June 17 in which he refers to an accusation brought against him by a quarrelsome Colonel Sir John Guise to the effect that he had made a large sum of money out of his command in Holland. See *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1690–91, p. 34; Dalton, *Army Lists*, ii, 244. This may conceivably be connected with the Jacobite story that Marlborough when in Flanders had drawn pay for more men than were actually in his command. In any case, he had instantly referred the matter to the King. See also below, p. 421.

among the few Cabinet officers who did not volunteer to take command of the fleet. We must admire the spirit of these elderly nobles, none of whom knew one end of a ship from the other, and most of whom were devoid of military instruction or experience. They said they would sit on board the flagship and make the sea captains fight. Fortunately such desperate remedies were not required.

In the middle of August the Council was astonished to receive from the Commander-in-Chief a proposal of which he guaranteed the success, and on which he declared to the Queen that he would stake his reputation. This was to send the bulk of the regular troops out of the country upon an expedition to Ireland. Their minds, so lately exposed to the apprehensions of invasion, did not respond to his view that the danger had passed, and that the initiative should be regained. Danby's antagonism to Marlborough had become personal and pronounced. When Marlborough wished his brother George to be promoted Admiral, Danby rudely remarked, "If Churchill have a flag, he will be called the flag by favour, as his brother is called the general of favour."

Inspired by Danby, the Council vetoed the project, but since Marlborough was supported by Admiral Russell and aided by Nottingham, the Queen referred it to the King. Marlborough's plan was to seize the ports of Cork and Kinsale, which were the principal contact bases of the French in Ireland, and thus cut Ireland from French reinforcements. A double attack on the Jacobite forces in Ireland from the south as well as from the north would, he declared, be decisive. William, who was besieging Limerick, debated the matter with his Dutch generals. They, like the English Council of State, were adverse. But the King saw at once the strategic merits and timeliness of the plan. He discarded his generals' advice, overruled the Council, and placed Marlborough in charge of the expedition.

He wrote to him from the siege of Limerick:[1]

August 14/24, 1690

*I have just received your letter of the 7th. I strongly approve of your plan to embark with four thousand infantry and the marines, which together make four thousand nine hundred men, and is a sufficient force to capture Cork and Kinsale. You will have to take enough munitions with you, and use the ships' guns, for we can send you none from here. But for cavalry I will send you enough, and will take good care that the army [*i.e.*, the enemy's army] shall not be a burden upon

[1] Blenheim MSS.

you. It is only time which must be saved, and you must hasten as quickly as you can, and let me know about when you will be there.

WILLIAM R.[1]

The Queen was still doubtful. "If the wind continues fair," she wrote to her husband,

I hope this business will succeed; though I find, if it do not, those who have advised it will have an ill time, all except Lord Nott[ingham] being very much against it, Lord President only complying, because it is your order, but not liking it, and wondering England should be so exposed, thinking it too great a hazard.[2]

However, the orders were issued.

This was Marlborough's first independent command. He had not sought to go to Ireland before, and it is presumed that he did not wish to fight against an army led by King James in person. But now James was gone. The season was far advanced, and all preparations were made with the utmost speed. The expedition and its shipping were concentrated at Portsmouth, whither Marlborough repaired by August 26, and embarked on the 30th. He spread false rumours that it was intended to raid the coast of Normandy as a reprisal for Teignmouth; but the French were not deceived. Marlborough's sailing was delayed for a fortnight by contrary winds while every day was precious. The health of the troops on board suffered, and their supplies were partly consumed. But the mere rumour of the thrust produced a strategic effect. Leaving their Irish allies to their fate, Lauzun and Tyrconnel, who were tired of Ireland, and had no intention of being cut off there, retreated to France with the remainder of the French contingent.

Marlborough, very seasick, sailed on September 17, "bound (by God's assistance)," as the cautious master of the flagship wrote, "for ye coast of Ireland, Being of all Sorts about 82 Sayle."[3] After

1 14/24 *d'Aoust* 1690

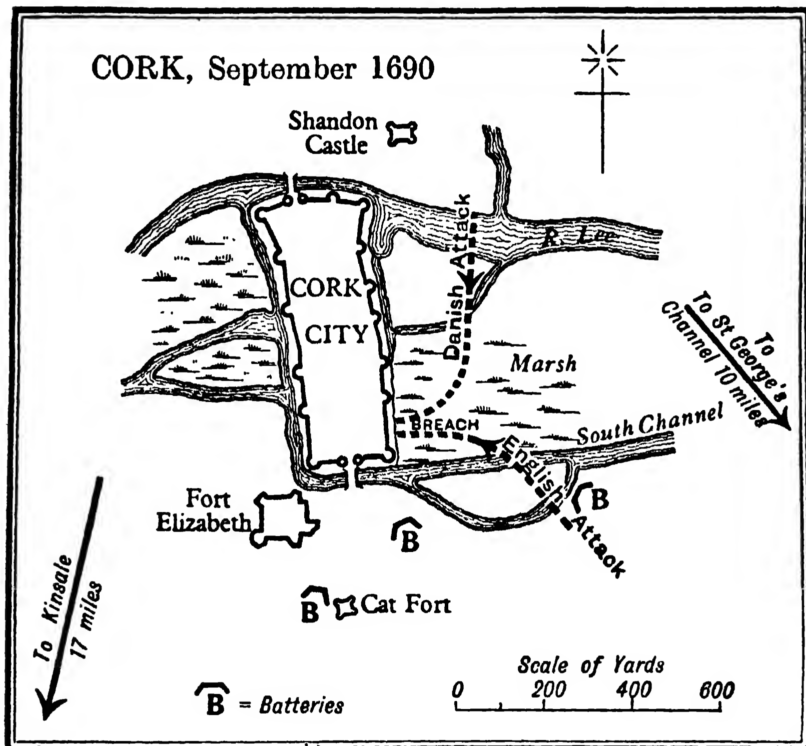
*Je vien de recevoir vostre lettre du 7, J'approuve fort le dessin que vous avez de vous embarquer sur la flote avec 4000 fantaissons et les Regt: Mariniers qui fairont ensemble 4900 hommes ce qui est un corps sufficient pour prendre Kingsale et Corck. Il faudra que vous preniez l'ammunition sufficient Et quelque canon des Vesseaux car nous vous en pouvons point envoye d'icy, Mais pour la Cavallerie je vous en envoyeres ces sufficament et prenderes bien soin que l'armee ne vous tombera pas sur les bras, il n'y a que le temps qu'il faut bien menager et vous depescher le plus tost qu'il vous sera possible et m'advertir environ du temps que vous y pourez estre

WILLIAM R.

2 Augut 26 /September 5 (Dalrymple, iii, Book V, 128).

3 Finch Papers, ii, pp. 438–439.

silencing the batteries at the mouth of Cork Harbour he ran in upon the tide to Passage West and disembarked his army of about six thousand men seven miles inland during Tuesday, September 22. William meanwhile had abandoned the siege of Limerick, and returned to London. He had left orders with Ginkel to send five thousand men to join Marlborough in accordance with the plan.



Marlborough had particularly asked that this detachment should consist of English troops, of whom there was no lack in the main army, and for Kirke, who was available, to command them. The Dutch general had no intention of allowing any purely English force or English commander to gain an independent success. It was with all the Dutchmen from William downward a maxim that the English were ignorant of war and must be strongly led by trained foreign officers and upheld by disciplined foreign troops. Ginkel had therefore, with many profuse apologies, selected five thousand Danes, Dutch, and Huguenots, who had now arrived on the north side of Cork under the Duke of Würtemberg.

This magnifico was junior in military rank to Marlborough, but far above him in birth. He claimed, as a prince of a royal house, to command the whole operation. A vexatious dispute, which Ginkel had foreseen with relish, arose. Marlborough displayed his commission from the Queen, and the Duke referred to his lineage and lost his temper. Meanwhile their two forces occupied the outlying works of Cork by separate action. There was no time to appeal for a decision about the command to William, and no certainty how he would have settled it. To secure unity, therefore, Marlborough was forced, not for the last time in his life, to propose the vicious expedient of antiquity that the rival generals should exercise command on alternate days. Würtemberg was with difficulty persuaded to accept this compromise. When the first day fell by lot to Marlborough he chose "Würtemberg" as the password for the troops. The Duke, surprised and mollified by this courtesy, selected "Marlborough" as the word for the second day, and thereafter made no further difficulties. Indeed, he seems to have yielded himself naturally and easily to Marlborough's guidance, once he felt it.

The governor of Cork, Colonel McElligott, returned a disdainful answer to the summons to surrender, and the attack upon the city was at once begun. Its defences were in a neglected condition, and its garrison of about five thousand men was too small to hold all the necessary works. Powerful batteries were landed from the fleet, and a breach made in the eastern wall. Marlborough was ready to assault on the evening of the 26th; but the governor beat a parley, which, though it came to nothing, allowed the tide to rise and gained him another day. At dawn on Sunday, the 27th, all was again in readiness. The batteries, supported by a frigate, which came up the river on the flood, bombarded the breach in the town. A Danish column a thousand strong forded the northern arm of the river, and at one o'clock Charles Churchill, Marlborough's brother, whom he had made a Brigadier, with fifteen hundred English infantry, headed by many noblemen and gentlemen volunteers, plunged into the estuary. The water, though ebbing, was breast-high, the current strong, and the fire from the ramparts heavy. But both Danes and English advanced undaunted and occupied the counterscarp. As they re-formed here for the final storm McElligott hoisted the white flag. In view of his trick of the day before, no terms were offered. What was left of the garrison, about four thousand men, became prisoners of war. Marlborough

Kensington ce 4/14 d'Oct. 1690.

Vous pouvez croire comme j'ay esté rejoui de la prise de Cork vous en felicitant aussi pour la part que vous y avez dont je vous remercie, j'espere que j'apprendray bientost le mesme touchant la place de Kinsale, et que je vous reverrez en peu en parfaite santé. A l'egard des prisonniers que vous avez faits a Cork l'on dit qu'il y a une Isle auprès, ou l'on les pourroit garder seurement, et quoy qu'ils me couteront beaucoup en pain, cette depense est inevitable jusques a ce que j'en puis disposer autrement, ce que je ne puis faire si tost. Soyez tousjours asseuré de la continuation de mon amitié.

William R.

WILLIAM'S LETTER TO MARLBOROUGH AFTER THE STORMING OF CORK

Blenheim MSS.

entered the city the next day, and sternly suppressed the looting which had begun.[1]

The world of those days was small, and many intimate ties existed across the fronts of war. After the departure of Tyrconnel the Duke of Berwick, now nineteen, commanded what was left of James's adherents in Ireland. He approached with a force of five or six thousand men as near as he dared to the city, hoping to extricate the garrison; but the quality of his troops did not permit him to intervene. He was the spectator, by no means for the last time, of his uncle's success. Although their lives lay on opposite sides, they both felt the bond of kinship, corresponded in a manner which would not be tolerated in any modern war, and admired each other's growing military repute.

There was another reminder of the jovial times. While Arabella's son by James II hung upon the outskirts of Marlborough's army, the Duke of Grafton, Barbara's son by Charles II, had fallen in the forefront of the attack. He was but twenty-six, and cherished the warmest sentiments of friendship and admiration for his mother's old lover. Together they had plotted against James; together they had quitted the camp at Salisbury; together they had restored order among Feversham's disbanded troops. William, wrongly suspecting Charles II's bastard of Jacobite inclinations and offended by his vote for a regency, had deprived him of his regiment, the 1st Guards, but gave him instead a man-of-war. In this ship, the *Grafton*, the Duke had carried Marlborough from Portsmouth, and, landing with six hundred seamen, had planted the besieging batteries. Exposing himself with his customary bravery when trying to advance some of his guns, he received a wound of which he died eleven days later. "I die contented," he said with dignity at the end, "but I should be more satisfied were I leaving my country in a happier and more tranquil state." He will best be remembered for his answer to James, who, irritated at his remonstrating with him about Popery, had exclaimed, "What have you to say about it? You have no

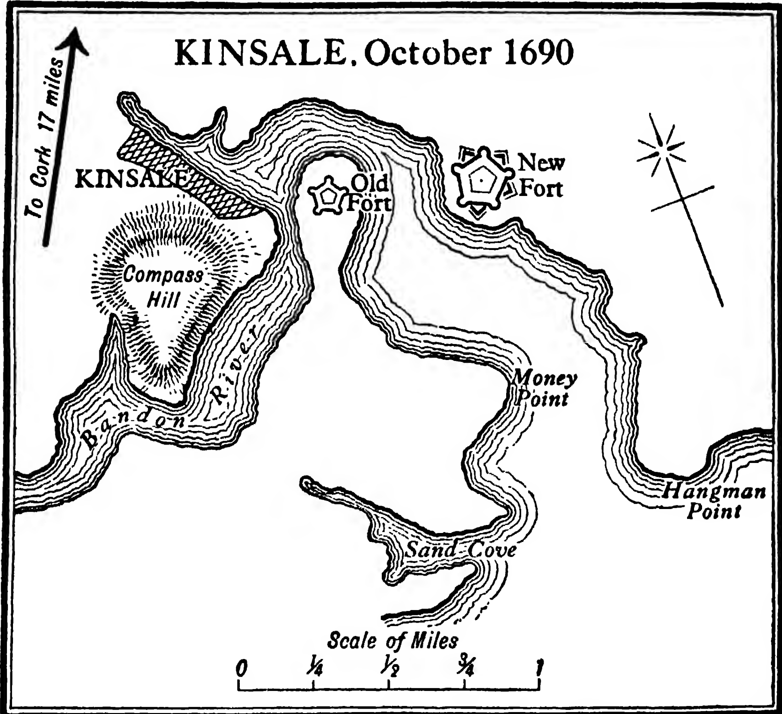
[1] Another of William's letters to Marlborough is of interest.

"A KENSINGTON
"*ce* 4/14 *Oct.* 1690

★"Vous pouvez croire comme j'ay este rejoui de la prise de Cork, vous en felicitent aussi pour la part que vous y avez dont je vous remercie, j'espere que j'aprenderes bien tost le meme heureux succes de Kingsale, Et que je vous revoirez en peu en parfaite sante. A l'eguard des Prisonniers que vous avez fait a Cork l'on dit qu'il y a une Isle aupres, ou l'on les pouroit garder seurement. Et quoy qu'ils me couteront beaucoup en pain, cette depense est inevitable, jusques a ce que j'en puis disposer autrement et que je ne puis faire si tost, soiyez tousjour asseure de la continuation de Mon Amitie."

conscience." "*I* may have no conscience," replied Grafton, "but I belong to a party which has plenty."

From Cork Marlborough, without an hour's delay, turned to Kinsale, and the very next day his cavalry summoned the two forts which guarded the harbour to surrender. The town, which was undefended, was seized before it could be burned, thus affording



the necessary shelter for the troops. Marlborough arrived himself on Thursday, October 1, by which time considerable infantry forces had entered the town. He saw at once that the "New Fort" was much stronger than had been reported and if defended would require a regular siege. The governor, Sir Edward Scott, rejected the very favourable conditions that were offered, and, treating with contempt the threat that he would be hanged if he put the assailants to the trouble of a formal siege, addressed himself to a stubborn defence. The "Old Fort" was less well equipped, and Marlborough decided to attempt its storm. Tettau, the Dane, at the head of eight hundred men, was chosen for this rough task. At dawn on the Friday the

assault was delivered. The garrison proved three times as numerous as had been reported, but after a fierce and bloody fight the place was carried. A hundred Irish were killed and two hundred taken prisoners.

Undeterred by this example, Scott refused a renewed summons to surrender, answering coolly that he might consider it in another month. Trenches were opened forthwith, and by October 7 the English and Danes had sapped almost to the counterscarp. On the 11th the heavy batteries, transported with the utmost difficulty over the appalling roads from Cork, began their bombardment, and by the 15th a breach was pronounced ready for assault. Sarsfield, whose cavalry were in the neighbourhood, was not able to help the defenders, and the intrepid governor felt that enough was done for honour. He therefore opened negotiations, and Marlborough, whose trenches were knee-deep in water and who was worried by the approach of winter and fearful for the health of his troops, was glad to give him generous terms. Scott was allowed to march off to Limerick with his twelve hundred survivors under the customary compliments of war. But "as the enemy marched out, the Earl took a note of all their names, telling them that if ever they were hereafter in arms against King William, they should have no quarter."[1] The siege had cost Marlborough 250 men, and the hospitals were already crowded with sick. A hundred pieces of cannon and much military supplies fell to the victors. But this was the least part of the success. The capture of these southern harbours deprived Irish resistance of all hope of French succour, and rendered the entire reduction of the country possible as soon as the winter was over. Charles Churchill was appointed governor of Kinsale, and Marlborough's army went into winter quarters. He himself landed at Deal on October 28, having accomplished what he had planned and guaranteed with complete success.

He was extremely well received in London. "In twenty-three days," says Lord Wolseley, "Marlborough had achieved more than all William's Dutch commanders had done both in Ireland and abroad during the whole of the previous year."[2] "In the matter of skill," says Fortescue,[3] "the quiet and unostentatious captures of Cork and Kinsale in 1690 were far the most brilliant achievements of the war." William was most gracious: but the patronizing compliment he paid was characteristic of the Dutch attitude towards

[1] Le Fleming Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 301, News-letter of November 1, 1690.
[2] ii, 216.
[3] *History of the British Army*, i, 350.

British generals. "No officer living," he said, "*who has seen so little service as my Lord Marlborough*,[1] is so fit for great commands." Was Churchill's service, then, so scanty? Tangier, Sole Bay, Maestricht, at least two campaigns under Turenne, Sedgemoor, and now this very year Walcourt and Cork, certainly constituted a record of varied experience, of hard fighting and invariable good conduct by land and sea, in almost every rank from an ensign to a Lieutenant-General in independent command.

Marlborough did not return to Ireland, as some writers aver. We find him dining in January with Lord Lucas, Constable of the Tower, and ordering £100 to be distributed among "the poor Irish taken at Cork and Kinsale."[2] He certainly desired to have the chief command in Ireland in the campaign of 1691, and public opinion expected it. But it was no part of William's policy to let English soldiers gather laurels. The closing scenes in Ireland were reserved for Ginkel, while Marlborough, at the head of the British contingent in Flanders, was to make the campaign as one of the generals of the large army William had determined to command in person. He no doubt appreciated the kindness of the King in thus repairing the deficiencies of his military education; and his experiences in this campaign must at least have had the value of showing him some methods of war to be avoided.

The years 1689 and 1690 now lie exposed before us, and what was mystery to the actors is obvious to posterity. William had "taken England on his way to France"; James had looked upon Ireland as a stepping-stone to England. Although propagating the Catholic religion played so large a part in French policy, the times were too serious for excessive zeal. Attacked upon all sides by the coalition of Europe, Louis had to lay hold of material resources and attune his affairs to the severely practical requirements of self-preservation. James had therefore been instructed by the French Government, and was himself entirely disposed, to gather all Ireland to himself by an even-handed policy fair to Protestant and Catholic alike and thus prepare for his return to England. But the Irish people and army who welcomed him with so much enthusiasm knew little and recked less of these larger aspects of the Continental problem. They wanted to trample down the Protestants and take back the lands stolen from the monasteries at the Reformation and from their grandfathers by Cromwell. They sought to return definitely to the old fifteenth-century position and to blot out altogether the events

[1] Author's italics.

[2] Luttrell, *Relation*, ii, 167.

which had since occurred. In fact, they demanded then what they seek to-day—an independent Catholic establishment with the land in the possession of its original owners, subject only to the tribal and ancient customs of rural life in primitive communities. They took little interest in James's larger plans of recovering the English crown, and still less in Louis's dreams of French ascendancy throughout the world. In 1689 both William in England and James in Ireland found themselves gravely embarrassed by the smaller and more local views intensely held by the populations whose respective champions they sought and seemed to be. To William England was a somewhat sluggish recruit for an anti-French coalition. To James Ireland was a stage upon which he must pose effectively before an English audience. To Louis England and Ireland were areas which must be thrown into sufficient disorder to improve the military situation on the challenged frontiers of France. Thus, much confusion arose on all sides; but in the end the main antagonisms of Europe predominated. The supreme duel of William *versus* Louis and of Europe *versus* France drew all other passionate interests into its vortex, and all subsidiary divergent issues, although they produced an infinity of perplexity and suffering, were drilled, cudgelled, disciplined, and forced to range themselves in one line or the other of the general war.

Chapter Twenty

THE PERSONAL CLEAVAGE

1690–1691

TO understand history the reader must always remember how small is the proportion of what is recorded to what actually took place, and above all how severely the time factor is compressed. Years pass with chapters and sometimes with pages, and the tale abruptly reaches new situations, changed relationships, and different atmospheres. Thus the figures of the past are insensibly portrayed as more fickle, more harlequin, and less natural in their actions than they really were. But if anyone will look back over the last three or four years of his own life or of that of his country, and pass in detailed review events as they occurred and the successive opinions he has formed upon them, he will appreciate the pervading mutability of all human affairs. Combinations long abhorred become the order of the day. Ideas last year deemed inadmissible form the pavement of daily routine. Political antagonists make common cause and, abandoning old friends, find new. Bonds of union die with the dangers that created them. Enthusiasm and success give place to resentment and reaction. The popularity of Governments departs as the too bright hopes on which it was founded fade into normal and general disappointment. But all this seems natural to those who live through a period of change. All men and all events are moving forward together in a throng. Each individual decision is the result of all the forces at work at any given moment, and the passage of even a few years enables—nay, compels—men and peoples to think, feel, and act quite differently without any insincerity or baseness.

Thus we have seen our England, maddened by the Popish Plot into Test Acts and Exclusion Bills, placing after a few years a Popish sovereign on the throne with general acclamation. We have seen her also, angered by his offences, unseat him by an almost universal shrug of the shoulders and set the island crown upon the brow of a foreign prince. And now we shall see a very strong reaction which arose against that Prince or Parliamentary King and

cast gleams of public favour upon the true King over the water. The possibility of the return of James could never be absent from the minds of those who had been witnesses of the miracle of the restoration of Charles. Moreover, many of the reasons which had led to the expulsion of James had disappeared. A new Constitution had established the power of Parliament and limited effectually the prerogative and authority of the Crown. No one could doubt that if James returned it would be as the result of a bargain which consolidated the principles of a limited monarchy and upheld beyond the chance of challenge the Protestant character of the English people. Those who write with crude censure of the shame of deserting James for William or William for James seem to forget that James and William were not ends in themselves. They were the instruments by which the power and happiness of England might be gained or marred. The loyalties due to their kingly office or hereditary titles were not the only loyalties to which English statesmen had a right and duty to respond. There was, for instance, the interest of the country, to which an increasingly conscious loyalty was due. In those days, as in these, men were by character true or false; but unswerving fidelity to a particular king was no test of their virtue or baseness.

The events of the Revolution had created conditions in England to which no parallel exists in later times. Many of the magnates who had dethroned and expelled James still revered him in their hearts, in spite of all the Acts of Parliament they had passed, as their real, natural sovereign. Every one regarded the imperious and disagreeable Dutchman who had had to be brought in and set up for the sake of Protestantism and civil liberty as a necessary evil. They saw his dislike and contempt for Englishmen. They understood that he regarded England mainly as a powerful tool for his Continental schemes, conceived primarily in the interest of Holland. With anxious eyes they watched his unpopularity increasing with the growth of taxes and distress through long years of war rarely lighted by success. The danger of his death from natural causes, from assassination, or upon the battlefield, where he so often bravely exposed himself, and the grave constitutional issues which would renew themselves upon such an event, were ever present to their minds. Devoted to the Protestant faith, and determined that the English Constitution should not sink to a despotism upon the French model, they none the less had to take into account the possible pursuance of their objects under violently and suddenly

changed conditions. It was not wonderful that they should have acted upon the ancient Greek maxim, "Love as though you shall hereafter hate, and hate as though you shall hereafter love." It was an epoch of divided loyalties, of conflicting interests, of criss-cross ties, of secret reserves and much dissembling. When kings forswear their oaths of duty and conspire against their peoples, when rival kings or their heirs crowd the scene, statesmen have to pick and choose between sovereigns of fluctuating values, as kings are wont to pick and choose between politicians according to their temporary serviceableness. The conditions and standards of this period, like its tests and stresses, were different from our own. Nevertheless, as we contend, the main feature which emerges is that of steadfastness and not deceit, of patriotism above self-interest, and of courage and earnestness, rather than of craft and opportunism.

Through all these baffling changes, of which only the barest outline can be realized by posterity, Halifax seems to have threaded his way with truer hold upon the essential interest of England than any other figure of whom we have record. We have seen him a Protestant opponent of the Exclusion Bill and a Minister of James II. We have seen him an opponent of James II. We have seen him harshly conducting that fallen sovereign to Rochester. We have seen him the trusted counsellor of William III. We shall soon see him reopening his relations with the exiled James. No one but a blind partisan of the Whig or Tory factions of those vanished days would find it impossible to vindicate all these successive and superficially inconsistent actions of Halifax as being both sincere and in the public interest. On the whole throughout this long, tempestuous period Marlborough, as we have seen, moved politically with Halifax. His broad outlook upon affairs, his sane and reasonable temperament, his indifference towards the two parties, his hatred of excess or revenge, his antagonism to France, his adherence to the Protestant cause, all conform to the Halifax type, and step by step his actions harmonize with those of the illustrious 'Trimmer.'

Longer than any other race in the world the English have exercised the right or power of dismissing a Government of which they have tired, and in the main our civilization has gained by this process. But in the days when party leaders were rival kings, when dislike of bad government was disloyalty, when resistance to a misguided king was treason, the ordinary transactions of modern political life wore a dire and sinister aspect. It was not possible to take part in public affairs without giving solemn oaths, nor to address the royal

personage who was the party leader except in the obsequious and adulatory terms which are still conventional. Not merely exclusion from public office, but confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and possibly death overhung all who were found on the losing side in any of the convulsions of State. In consequence public men often endeavoured when possible to minimize their risks and to mitigate for themselves and their families the consequences of a dynastic change. No such anxieties beset the Victorians or trouble us to-day. All our fundamentals have been for many generations securely established. The prizes of public life have diminished; its risks have been almost entirely removed. High office now means not the road to riches, but in most cases financial sacrifice. Power under the Crown passes from hand to hand with smooth decorum. The 'Ins' and 'Outs' take their turn in His Majesty's Government and in His Majesty's Opposition usually without a thought of personal vengeance, and often without a ruffle of private friendship. But are we really so sure that the statesmen of the twentieth century are entitled to sit in judgment upon those of the seventeenth? The age is gentler, the personal stakes and the players themselves are smaller, but the standard is not always so far superior that we should watch with unshakable confidence our modern political leaders subjected to the strains of Halifax, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, or Marlborough.

We must now look more closely upon the extraordinary Prince who for good reasons and in the general interest had robbed his father-in-law of his throne. From his earliest years William's circumstances had been harsh and sombre. His life was loveless. He was always fatherless and childless. His marriage was dictated by reasons of State. He was brought up by his termagant grandmother, Amalia of Solms, and in his youth was passed for regulation from one Dutch committee to another. His childhood was unhappy and his health bad. He had a tubercular lung, was asthmatic and partly crippled. But within this emaciated and defective frame there burned a remorseless fire, fanned by the storms of Europe, and intensified by the stern compression of his surroundings. His great actions began before he was twenty-one. From that age he had fought constantly in the field and toiled through every intrigue of Dutch domestic politics and of the European scene. For the last four years he had been the head of the English conspiracy against James.

Women meant little to him. For a long time he treated his loving, faithful wife with much severity. As a husband he was arbitrary

without being uxorious. He was at once exacting and cold. Mary's life in Holland for ten years was narrow and restricted. William fenced her about with Dutch attendants and chased away even her English chaplain. She had to be taught to look at the world entirely through his eyes, and not to see too much through them. Bishop Ken's account of this period is not pleasant reading. Although the witty Elizabeth Villiers (afterwards Lady Orkney) upheld the family tradition by becoming his titular mistress, he was certainly not a squire of dames. Later on, towards the end of his reign, when he saw how much Mary had helped him in the English sphere of his policy, he was sincerely grateful to her, as to a faithful friend or Cabinet officer who had maintained the Government. His grief at her death was unaffected.

In religion he was, of course, a Calvinist; but he does not seem to have derived much spiritual solace from these forbidding doctrines. In practice as a sovereign and commander he was entirely without religious prejudices. No agnostic could have displayed more philosophic impartiality. Protestant, Catholic, Jew, or infidel were all the same to him. He dreaded and hated Gallican Catholicism less because it was to him idolatrous than because it was French; he employed Catholic officers without hesitation when they would serve his purpose. He used religious questions as counters in his political combinations. While he beat the Protestant drum in England and Ireland, he had potent influence with the Pope, with whom his relations were at all times a model of comprehending statesmanship. It almost seemed that a being had been created for the sole purpose of resisting the domination of France and the Great King. His public hatred of France and his personal quarrel with Louis XIV constituted the main theme of his life. All his exertions were directed against the tyrant who had not only compassed the ruin of the Dutch Republics, but had actually seized and dragooned the small principality of Orange with which his family pride was interwoven.

It was the natural characteristic of such an upbringing and of such a mission that William should be ruthless. Although he did not conspire in the murder of the de Witts, he rejoiced at it, profited by it, and protected and pensioned the murderers. His conduct in the Massacre of Glencoe was entirely unfeeling. Neither the treachery nor the butchery of that crime disturbed his cynical serenity. He was vexed and worried only about the outcry that arose afterwards. He would break a political opponent without pity,

but he was never needlessly cruel, and was glad to treat foes no longer dangerous with contempt or indifference. He wasted no time on minor revenges. His sole vendetta was with Louis. For all his experience from his youth at the head of armies and for all his dauntless heart, he was never a great commander. He had not a trace of that second sight of the battlefield which is the mark of military genius. He was no more than a resolute man of good common sense whom the accident of birth had carried to the conduct of war. It was in the sphere of politics that his inspiration lay. Perhaps he has never been surpassed in the sagacity, patience, and discretion of his statecraft. The combinations he made, the difficulties he surmounted, the adroitness with which he used the time factor, or played upon the weakness of others, the unerring sense of proportion and power of assigning to objectives their true priorities, all mark him for the highest fame.

William watched with ill-concealed disfavour the protracted wranglings of the English chiefs and parties. His paramount interest was in the great war now begun throughout Europe and in the immense confederacy he had brought into being. He despised the insularity and lack of vision, as it seemed to him, of those over whom he was now to rule. He had regarded the English expedition as a divagation, a duty necessary but tiresome, which had to be accomplished for a larger purpose. He grudged the delays which held him in London, and later in Ireland, from the decisive theatre of world events. He was never fond of England, nor interested in her domestic affairs. Her seamy side was all he knew. He repeatedly urged Parliament to address itself to the Continental situation. He required the wealth and power of England by land and sea for the European war. It was for this he had come in person to enlist her. Although he had himself darkly and deviously conspired the undoing of his foolish kinsman, he thought little of the English public men who had been his confederates. A prince himself, he could not but distrust men who, albeit at his instigation, had been guilty of treason to their royal master. He knew too much about their jealousies and intrigues to cherish for them sentiments of liking or respect. He had used them for his own ends, and would reward them for their services; but as a race he regarded them as inferior in fibre and fidelity to his Dutchmen. English statesmen to him were perjured, and, what was even worse, local-minded. English soldiers seemed to him uncouth and ill-trained by Continental standards. English generals lacked the professional knowledge which, he believed, long

experience of war alone could give. The English Navy was no doubt brave and hardy, but his own sentiments naturally rested upon the traditions of Tromp and de Ruyter. The Dutch were his children; the English could never be more than his step-children, to whom, indeed, he owed a parental duty and from whose estate he was entitled during his guardianship to draw substantial advantages.

Once securely seated on the throne he scarcely troubled to disguise these sentiments. A Jacobite observer, General Dillon, who as a page at this time had good opportunities, has recorded that in 1689

> he never saw English noblemen dine with the Prince of Orange, but only the Duke of Schomberg who was always placed at his right hand and his Dutch general officers. The English noblemen that were there stood behind the Prince of Orange's chair but never were admitted to eat and sit.

The Earls of Marlborough and Clarendon were often in attendance, but "were dismissed when the dinner was half over." Dillon says that he was there for several days before he ever heard the Prince of Orange speak a word at table. On his asking his companion page, the young, handsome Keppel, whether he never spoke, Keppel replied "that he talked enough at night over his bottle when he was got with his friends."[1] It was not surprising that these manners, and still more the mood from which they evidently arose, gave deep offence. For the English, although submissive to the new authority of which they had felt the need, were as proud and haughty as any race in Europe. No one relishes being an object of aversion and contempt, especially when these affronts are unstudied, spontaneous, and sincere. The great nobles and Parliamentarians who had made the Revolution and were still rigidly set upon its purpose could not but muse upon the easy gaiety and grace of the Court of Charles II. They remembered that James, with all his political faults, had the courtesy and dignity which distinguished the later Stuarts. Politics apart, they soon began wistfully to look back to the days when they had a king of their own.

The King's unsociable disposition, his greediness at table, his silence and surliness in company, his dislike of women, his neglect of London, all prejudiced him with polite society. The ladies voted him "a low Dutch bear." The English Army too was troubled in its soul. Neither officers nor men could dwell without a sense of

[1] Macpherson, *Original Papers*, i, 284 (based on Carte's memorandum of an actual conversation with Dillon in 1724).

humiliation upon the military aspects of the Revolution. They did not like to see all the most important commands entrusted to Dutchmen. They eyed sourly the Dutch infantry who paced incessantly the sentry-beats of Whitehall and St James's, and contrasted their shabby blue uniforms and small stature with the scarlet pomp of the 1st Guards and Coldstreamers now banished from London. It was a pity, thought they, that the public interest had not allowed them to give these fellows a drubbing.

It is curious indeed that the English statesman who most commanded the new King's confidence and enjoyed his intimacy was the one who least deserved it. Sunderland had fled to Holland when King James's power collapsed, in fear apparently of Catholic vengeance for having led his master to ruin. We have found at Blenheim one of his few surviving letters. It is of interest for the light it casts both upon his own position and upon his relations with Churchill. He wrote to Churchill from Rotterdam on December 19, 1688:

> *After the long friendship we have had and our manner of living for many years, I can not doubt but you will contribute what you can to make things easy for a man in my condition; therefore it is not necessary for me to write at this time. But, my wife going into England, I would not omit putting you in mind of me and begging you will assist her and always wanting money and never so much as now. If she speaks to you for the George and Garter which I desired you or My Lady Churchill would keep for me, pray give them to her. This I think was unnecessary but so are many other things I do, particularly my going away; for when I saw you last and a great while before, I apprehended nothing but from the Papists. I hope I was in the right and that it is so still.

It seems incredible that one so exposed in character and discredited in counsel should regain a foremost position in the country he had served so queerly. Yet within two years this Papist recusant who had contrived at the same moment to be false to England and to King James, while drawing a salary from France and intriguing with William, found himself in the highest favour of the Protestant deliverer, became the chief influence in the forming of Cabinets, and was soon again the most intimate adviser of the Crown. Castlereagh in another century was to justify his support of Talleyrand after Waterloo on the grounds that the French were a nation of criminals and that the biggest criminal was most capable of managing them. A similar reasoning seems to have drawn William to

Sunderland. His only other English favourite was Henry Sidney, whose influence and affluence were a cause of comment. For the rest his well-proved Dutch or foreign friends were the recipients of the royal bounty. Bentinck became Earl of Portland, Zulestein Earl of Rochford, Ruvigny Earl of Galway, old Schomberg Duke of Schomberg,[1] young Schomberg Duke of Leinster; and all were enriched by well-paid offices and large estates granted them from the Crown lands.

Cracks had speedily appeared in the fabric of the original National Government. The Whigs considered that the Revolution belonged to them. All they had suffered since their far-seeing Exclusion Bills, all that they had risked in the great conspiracy, should now be rewarded. Their judgment, their conduct, their principles, had been vindicated. Ought they not, then, to have all the offices? Was it just they should be thrust aside in many cases for the "evil counsellors of the late king"? But William knew that he could never have gained the crown of England but by the help of the Cavaliers and Anglicans who formed the staple of the Tory Party. Moreover at this time, as a king he liked the Tory mood. Here was a party who exalted the authority of the Crown. Here was a Church devoted to hereditary monarchy and profoundly grieved to have been driven by the crisis from the doctrine of non-resistance. William felt that Whig principles would ultimately lead to a republic. Under the name of Stadtholder he was really the King of Holland; he had no desire under the name of King to be only Stadtholder of England. He was therefore ready to break up the convention Parliament which had given him the crown while, as the Whigs said, "its work was all unfinished." At the election of February 1690 "the buried names of Whig and Tory revived"; and the Tories won. Henceforward the party cleavage and party system became rigid, formal, and—down to our days—permanent.

There was, moreover, a moderate view. Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Marlborough, and Sunderland, and from a somewhat different angle Halifax, now ageing, held a middle position apart from party, and, as they no doubt thought, above it. "Their notion of party," writes Mr Feiling,

> was to use both or either of the factions to keep themselves well above water, and to further the royal service. For this last part should not be forgotten; if they could ko to any lengths to ensure their own future, three of them could in an emergency, if the nation's interests

[1] Killed at the Boyne in 1690.

at the moment happened to coincide with their own, shew magnificent patriotism and industry.[1]

Each of these men drew in others. "Shrewsbury was usually hand in glove with Wharton. Godolphin and Marlborough shared confidences with Russell."[2] It was upon this central body of men, pre-eminent for their gifts, unrivalled in experience of affairs and knowledge of the Court and Parliament, that William was naturally inclined to rely either as counsellors or Ministers, and he added thoroughpaced Whigs or Tories in different proportions to either flank to suit the changing needs of the years.

But the King's affairs moved inevitably in a vicious circle. He could not trust high military authority to Englishmen, nor allow English soldiers to win fame in the field, without, as he thought, placing himself in their power. In all the key posts of the Army he must have Dutchmen or foreigners. Thus he angered the English officers and the English Army, and found new justification for his distrust in their resentment. Most of all this cycle prejudiced the relations between him and Marlborough. Marlborough's desire was above everything to command armies in the great war now raging. He felt within himself qualities which, if they had their chance, would produce remarkable results for himself, for England, and for Europe. But though William desired the same political ends, he feared their being gained by Marlborough. He remembered General Monk; he remembered what had happened at Salisbury. Therefore it became with him a necessary principle of his existence to bar Marlborough's natural and legitimate professional career. The abler general Marlborough showed himself, the more he must be kept in a subordinate station; the greater his talents the more imperative their repression.

Marlborough was made to realize all this, and perhaps its inevitability, at the beginning of 1691. He had rendered immense and even decisive services to the new régime both in the crisis of the Revolution and during the Revolution settlement. His had been almost the only military achievements of 1690. The charge at Walcourt, the swift seizure of Cork and Kinsale, were outstanding episodes. It was variously rumoured in London that he would be created a Duke and Knight of the Garter, would be appointed Master-General of the Ordnance, and would be commander-in-chief in Ireland for the coming campaign. A dukedom he considered beyond his means, and he was to refuse one ten years later on the

[1] P. 282. [2] P. 281.

same grounds; but we know from letters which Anne and her husband wrote to the King that he desired the Garter. He wanted the Ordnance to support his title; and above all he sought an independent command in one of the theatres of war. He found himself denied on all points. The Ordnance went to Henry Sidney, a civilian who was destitute of any qualifications of which history can take notice. Ginkel had the command in Ireland, and Waldeck, in spite of Fleurus, had, under the King, the command in Flanders. Of course Marlborough ought not to have minded such treatment. He ought to have been indifferent, like our modern generals, statesmen, and financiers, to personal ambitions or material interests. However, he took it all very much amiss. He seems to have come to the conclusion that William meant to keep him down. Under James he saw his path blocked by Papists: under William by Dutchmen.

The campaign of 1691 opened in imposing style with a conference at The Hague. A league of nations assembled to concert measures against the common enemy, France. England, Holland, Prussia, the German states, the Empire, Spain, and a dozen smaller powers—all sent their representatives. Such a gathering of princes and statesmen had scarcely been seen before in Christendom. At the summit stood William in all his glory, the architect of this immense confederation of rival states and conflicting faiths, the sovereign of its two most vigorous nations, the chief commander of its armies, lacking nothing but the military art. This splendid ceremonial was rudely interrupted by the cannon. It was scarcely etiquette to begin operations before April or May; but early in March Louis XIV, with Luxembourg as his general and Vauban as his engineer, suddenly appeared with a hundred thousand men before the valuable barrier fortress of Mons. William was forced to descend from his pedestal and mount his horse. He could muster an army of barely fifty thousand, and these could only be spectators of the fall of Mons. So much for the Hague conference.

Marlborough had been left in England charged with the task of recruitment for the Army. We have a letter which shows that he was on bad terms with Danby, but still on good terms with the King.[1]

WHITEHALL
February 17, 1691

I here send your Majesty a copy of what we have done concerning the recruits. I must at the same time take leave to tell your Majesty that

[1] Dalrymple, iii, Part II, 247.

> I am tired out of my life with the unreasonable way of proceeding of [the] Lord President, for he is very ignorant what is fit for an officer, both as to recruits and everything else as to a soldier; so that when I have given such as I think necessary orders, he does what he thinks fit, and enters into the business of tents, arms, and the off-reckonings, which were all settled before your Majesty left England, so that at this rate business is never done; but I think all this proceeds from, I hope, the unreasonable prejudice he has taken against me, which makes me incapable of doing you that service which I do with all my heart and soul wish to do, for I do with much truth wish both your person and Government to prosper. I hope it will not be long before your Majesty will be here, after which I shall beg never to be in England when you are not.

In May the allied forces took the field with the object at least of recovering Mons. William gave Marlborough the command of the British contingent, and to make the necessary vacancy moved Tollemache to Ireland, to serve under Ginkel. Marlborough and Count Solms were sent forward to organize the assembly of the main army in the neighbourhood of Brussels. Waldeck commanded while William rested awhile in his home palace at Loo. Luxembourg, with a solid French army, barred the way to Mons. At the end of June William arrived at headquarters, and the campaign began in earnest. It was the first time since the reign of Henry VIII that a King of England had commanded in person on the Continent, and all the young bloods of quality and fashion had hurried from London to let off their pistols. But nothing happened. Luxembourg stood on the defensive in positions too well chosen for William to attack. The great armies marched and counter-marched according to the orthodox rules of war, and the precious summer months slipped away. By the end of August all was over. William, baffled and a trifle humiliated, led his armies back to their cantonments. They passed on their way the field of Fleurus, where the grisly spectacle of Waldeck's unburied corpses struck a chill through a disappointed host. William handed over the command to Waldeck and returned to Loo.

But the adversities of the campaign were not yet ended. In the middle of September, when custom should have enforced upon Luxembourg the propriety of retiring into winter quarters, he organized an outrageous cavalry attack upon the rearguard of the allied army while it was moving from Leuze to Gramont. The rising French officer Villars routed the Dutch cavalry and sabred

them from the field. The confusion spread to the infantry. The sudden heavy firing rang through the autumn air. There was a tumult of scampering horses and men. Marlborough, marching in his station with the British contingent, had already passed the Cartoise stream. He turned sharply back and marched towards the bridges at the utmost speed, apparently in the mood for battle. A broad flush of red and steel spread menacingly across the landscape. But Luxembourg, cool and composed in the cavalry action and content with the day, disengaged his excited army before the British brigades could deploy; and the fighting of the year ended for the allies upon this somewhat ridiculous incident, in which there were, however, above seven hundred casualties.[1] The Prince of Waldeck led the discomfited Dutch and angry English into their winter quarters; and in all their camps and garrisons the word ran round that King William had "entered the field too late, and quitted it too soon."

We have two sketches of our hero in the setting of these unsatisfactory affairs. The first, at William's headquarters, rests on the account of the Pensionary Heinsius, afterwards Marlborough's greatest standby in Holland. The King asked the Prince of Vaudemont what he thought of his English generals. Although Marlborough had had no opportunity of handling the troops in the field, his personality, his organizing and administrative powers, and his part in council had produced an impression. Vaudemont is said to have answered in these words: "Kirke has fire, Lanier thought, Mackay skill, and Colchester bravery; but there is something inexpressible in the Earl of Marlborough. All their virtues seem to be united in his single person. I have lost," he added emphatically, "my wonted skill in physiognomy, if any subject of your Majesty can ever attain such a height of military glory as that to which this combination of sublime perfections must raise him." "Cousin," said King William, who was never incapable of discerning unwelcome truths, "you have done your part in answering my question, and I believe the Earl of Marlborough will do his to verify your prediction."[2]

The second glimpse—one of the very few which reveal Marlborough's enthusiasm—we owe to the Comte de Dohna. The armies had been drawn up at Beaumont in the hope of battle. The British were in their full array.

[1] *Cf.* Carstares to Lord Polwarth, Loo, September 17, 1691, *H.M.C.*, XIV, iii, 123.
[2] *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals.*

"We had become acquainted," writes the Prussian general,

> and as between soldiers, especially on such an occasion, it is customary to talk shop, Marlborough showed me his English, smart troops and brisk. He asked me if I did not believe them invincible and whether with such men were we not sure to beat the French? "Sir," I said, "you may see on the other side troops who believe themselves apparently equally invincible, and if that be so, there is clearly a conflict of opinion."[1]

This was an issue which was not to be settled for some time.

It was a heavy exertion for the states of those days, with their narrow finances, to keep such large armies in contact with an equal enemy for a whole season. The loss of a year weighed heavily on the fragile structure of the Grand Alliance. All William's skill in diplomacy had come to nothing at the point of action. John Churchill was then forty-three, in his prime. He possessed all the military knowledge and experience upon which he afterwards acted. As he watched those infirm yet stilted manœuvres, as he brooded on these wasted opportunities, as he no doubt felt how surely and how swiftly he could reshape the scene, and yet how carefully and tightly trammelled he was, can we wonder at the anger that possessed his soul? There was no prophetic spirit at his side to whisper, "Patience! The opportunity will yet be yours." His patience is almost proverbial. He had need for it all. Ten years, half of them years of war—ten years when the chances of a lifetime seemed finally to die—were to pass before he was again to exercise a military command.

[1] Christophe de Dohna, *Mémoires Originaux* (1883), pp. 151–152.

Chapter Twenty-one

KING JAMES'S MEMOIRS

HISTORY cannot proceed by silences. The chronicler of ill-recorded times has none the less to tell his tale. If facts are lacking, rumour must serve. Failing affidavits, he must build with gossip. Everything is relative. One doubtful fact has to be weighed against another. A rogue's testimony is better than no evidence. A forged letter, if ancient, is at least to be preferred to mere vacuity. Authentic documents and credible witnesses may be sought with perseverance; but where they do not exist the less trustworthy understudies who present themselves must be suffered, often without the proper apologies and reserves, to play the major parts, if the drama is to be presented at all. "Marry! this is something," and something at any rate is better than nothing. But when the process is complete, when every vestige of knowledge, such as it is, has been gathered, sifted, weighed, and fitted into the story, it may be well to ask whether the result corresponds at all with what actually happened. Listen to the confession of Ranke, most pregnant and fairest of historians.

> Some years ago I was reproved with writing history out of scraps. Certainly I do not, so long as detailed informants hold out. But when the originals were either lost, or are kept concealed, it is absolutely necessary to make use of less perfect accounts and fragmentary communications. It is just at such points that cases are wont to occur, which are purposely kept dark and which are among the most important.[1]

The historians of two hundred years have generally accepted the view that the leading Englishmen who made the Revolution of 1688 soon afterwards became traitors to the Protestant and constitutional cause. They conspired in the full and treacherous sense of the word against William III. They opened a close correspondence with the exiled King, and sought by every form of repentance and atonement to win his forgiveness. They divulged the secrets of the Council, betrayed naval and military war plans, tried to seduce the Army, or

[1] Ranke, *History of England*, vi, 42.

to put the fleet out of the way of an invader, and generally plotted to bring about a restoration backed by French bayonets. This they did in their base pursuit of wealth and honours, and to insure these enjoyments, if King James returned. These charges assail in varying degrees, but all effectively, Marlborough, Shrewsbury, Russell, Godolphin, Sunderland, Halifax, and later Somers, together with many other less important figures. If sustained, they depict them all as cheats and villains of the deepest dye. In fact, the types portrayed are those of Chinese mandarins rather than of European statesmen.

It has gratified the self-esteem of succeeding generations to dwell upon the depravity of an earlier and more famous age. However, it seems unlikely that persons in the highest station, devoted to solemn public causes, possessing high capacities and many noble and heroic gifts, should have all been of such shameful character. It is important to see whether what has been written against them is a fair representation of the truth: whether the versions given of their conduct are authoritative, authentic, impartial; whether and how far the evidence is untrustworthy, distorted, exaggerated, or definitely malicious; and whether what remains indisputable has been judged in its proper relation to the circumstances of the time. For this purpose it is necessary to search and test the foundations upon which the enormous and imposing façade of history is supported.

With these preliminaries let us proceed to survey the materials which actually exist. The reader must choose between accepting conclusions and going into the details for himself. The account of the documents is here presented in a simplified form. But most of the statements of fact are supported by a consensus of authorities. Where the authorities are at variance their division of opinion is recorded in the footnotes.

Apart from the gossip recorded in various English memoirs and contemporary letters, and a few documents in the French archives, the whole of the charge against the Revolution leaders rests upon such records as exist of what the Jacobites at Saint-Germains thought or wrote down about them. There are no holograph letters of any kind in existence. With the notable exception of the Camaret Bay Letter, to which a separate chapter will be devoted, there are not even reputed copies of any of Marlborough's letters. Surely this is remarkable. Whereas King William's archives contain many

holograph letters tantamount to treason written to him before the Revolution, and in particular Marlborough's letter of August 4, 1688, the Jacobite records are destitute of any similar original documents. Yet if the object of the conspirators was, as we are assured, to obtain pardons from James in the event of a restoration, it would have been natural for the exiled King to require some compromising gage, such as Churchill had so freely given to William. That Churchill would not have feared to do so can be judged from his action in William's case. If it be true that he begged for "two lines in the King's handwriting" according him his pardon, would it not have been reasonable for James to reply, "Then send me just two lines in yours"? We may be sure that if any holograph letters had existed they would have been preserved in the Jacobite archives with jealous care; and would have come down to us through the same channels as many less significant documents. However, there are none. None have come down, because none existed. There remain only the assertions of the Jacobite records. These records are therefore of the utmost interest.

In his early life James II was accustomed to write memoirs and notes of the events with which he was concerned. "He kept," says Burnet, "a constant Journal of all thatpassed, of which he showed me a great deal." His first wife, who died in 1671, began a Life of her husband "all drawn from his Journal." She showed a volume of her work to Burnet, whom James later on thought of employing to finish it. In his flight from England the King managed to save his papers. They were flung into a box and entrusted to the Tuscan Ambassador, who eventually sent them from Leghorn to Saint-Germains. Thirteen years later, on March 24, 1701, James by warrant entrusted "the original Memoirs . . . writ in our own hand" to the custody of Louis Inesse, or Inese (Innes), Principal of the Scots College in Paris, and of his successors. On January 22, 1707, his son the Old Pretender signed a warrant for the removal to Saint-Germains for some months of that part of "His Majesty's Memoirs and other papers written in his own hand" which relates to 1678 and later times. On November 9, 1707, he likewise signed a promise to settle one hundred pounds a year within six months of his restoration on the Scots College, "where the original Memoirs and MSS. of our Royal Father are deposited by his especial warrant." Louis Inesse was alive in 1734, and the papers were still in his custody. There is no doubt about the existence of the Memoirs nor where they lay during the whole of the eighteenth century. On the outbreak of the

French Revolution the Scots College tried by various channels to send these historical treasures to England for safety. In 1793 it is believed that a Monsieur Charpentier finally undertook the task. He was arrested at Saint-Omer, and his wife, fearing lest the Royal Arms of hostile England on the bindings might be compromising, first buried the volumes in the garden of her house, and later dug them up and burned them. Thus ended the travels of the Memoirs, the only original memoirs "writ in the King's own hand."[1]

However, his son the Old Pretender had fortunately caused a detailed biography of his father to be compiled from the Memoirs and other papers. This work in four volumes was also deposited at the Scots College, and rested there for many years side by side with the materials on which it was based and which it largely incorporated. A single sentence typical of many other indications shows that this "Life" was written some time in the first seventeen years of the eighteenth century. "Never child [the Old Pretender] had greater resemblance to his parents both in body and mind than *his present* Majesty has of the *late* King his Father and of the Queen his Mother."[2]

This sentence was evidently written after the death of James II and before that of the Queen. Further minute researches have narrowed the period to between the years 1704 and 1710; and many will think it reasonable to centre it about the year 1707, when, as we have seen, an important section of the documents was brought to Saint-Germains for some months. Thus there were the Memoirs, now defunct, and the *Life*, written after James's death by direction of the Old Pretender.

There has been much more doubt about the authorship of the *Life* than about its date. Some authorities consider it was written by Inesse himself. The other view is that it is the work of a Jacobite gentleman, a clerk at Saint-Germains, named Dicconson. The point is of small importance, but a letter will soon be placed before the reader which proves that Dicconson is the author.

A copy of Dicconson's work found a home with the English Benedictines in Italy, and during the Napoleonic wars was purchased by the Prince of Wales, and with much difficulty and six years of circuitous travel transported to England, where it arrived about the beginning of 1813. It was edited and published in 1816 by the

[1] See, *inter alia*, Stuart Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, and the introductions to Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, and C. J. Fox, *James II*.

[2] *Life of James II*, p. 195.

Rev. James Stanier Clarke, historiographer to the Prince of Wales, then become the Regent, as *The Life of James II collected out of Memoirs writ of his own hand.* This is a book of the highest interest and value. In all parts not attributable to James it is extremely well written. It is almost our only window on this sector of the past. It quotes or condenses a portion of the original Memoirs. The rest is the view of a Jacobite Catholic exile serving at the Court of Saint-Germains in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The facts are set forth as the Court at Saint-Germains viewed them and wished them to be believed.

Without hesitation we are told how James when Duke of York in 1669 formed his design for the forcible conversion of the English people to Rome; the arrangements with Louis, the French money, the seaports to be placed in the hands of trusty Papist governors, the measures to secure a Papist complexion and control of the Army, the cautious acquiescences of King Charles II, the long perseverance for nearly twenty years, now by this path, now by that—all are laid bare as performances of the highest virtue. Unconscious of the perfidy to every human engagement, to the laws of England, to the rights of subjects, to the repeated public and royal declarations and professions, and in apparent complete ignorance of the real facts of Charles's secret policy, as we have described them, the tale is told and counted as meritorious.

Here, then, in the Scots College in Paris, was the fountainhead; and to that fountain during the eighteenth century a few select persons came from time to time to sip and drink, or even to carry away a beaker or two.

The first of these, a conscientious investigator, Thomas Carte, a clergyman of the Church of England and a devoted adherent of the house of Stuart, had published his *Life of the Duke of Ormonde* in 1736. He then began collecting his materials for writing a history of England after Cromwell, to promote their restoration. He managed to purchase the papers of David Nairne, under-secretary to James II during his exile, and subsequently employed in the household of the Queen. He then applied for permission to make extracts from James's papers in the Scots College. Permission was granted to him in a letter written from Rome by one James Edgar, secretary to the Old Pretender, dated January 10, 1741.

"The King is pleased," ran the letter,

> by this post to send directions to Messrs Innes to give you the perusal at the Scots College at Paris of the complete Life of the late King his

father, *writ by Mr Dicconson in consequence of royal orders*,[1] all taken out of, and supported by the late King's MSS.

Carte's extracts from the archives of the Scots College were duly published. His original transcripts do not exist among the Carte papers, and historians have disputed whether the extracts were made from the Memoirs or from the *Life*.[2] He did not live to complete his history; but before he died in April 1754 he presented to the Bodleian Library at Oxford the first two instalments of thirty and twenty-six volumes respectively of the manuscripts in the collection of which his life had been largely spent. He left the remainder of his collection to his widow. She sent nine more volumes to the Bodleian in 1757, and bequeathed the rest to her second husband, Mr Nicholas Jernegan, with reversion to the University of Oxford. Jernegan sold the use of these documents for £300 to a certain James Macpherson, who used them for his publication of *Original Papers containing the secret history of Great Britain from the Restoration to the accession of the House of Hanover*. In 1778 Mr Jernegan sold his life interest in the Carte Collection to the University for £50, and the whole mass, aggregating with the previous gift nearly 250 volumes, was deposited in the Bodleian Library. Among these records are the seven volumes usually called "The Nairne Papers," of which more hereafter.

These papers, the fragmentary extracts said to have been made from James's Memoirs, and finally Dicconson's *Life* of James, edited by Clarke, are, virtually, the sole sources of knowledge of all the alleged transactions and communications between the Ministers, soldiers, and sailors of William III and Saint-Germains, and they form the only foundation upon which this part of the history of those times has been built by Macaulay and other famous writers. There is no doubt that these three sources are mainly one. The *Life* claims

[1] This in itself seems conclusive upon the question of authorship; but further proof is available.

[2] Ranke considered that they were made from the Memoirs. "No one has ever," he wrote in 1875, "doubted their authenticity"; and he proceeded to use them as a means of criticizing the value of Clarke's *Life*. He detected several notable differences between the Memoirs and the *Life*, and argued that in all cases the Memoirs, so far as they were represented by Carte's extracts—his only guide—were the more trustworthy. On the other hand, in a commentary on Clarke's *Life* in the *Edinburgh Review* of June 1816, a writer, anonymous but certainly of much learning, claimed to prove that Carte had only seen the *Life*, and that therefore the extracts had no independent value. He, like Ranke, closely compared passages of Carte's extracts from the Memoirs with Clarke's *Life* based on the Memoirs, coming to the opposite conclusion that Carte had made his extracts only from the *Life*. Finally he relied upon the Edgar letter, quoted above; which in itself appears almost decisive.

to be based on the Memoirs. The episodes and transactions recorded in the Nairne Papers, whether great or trivial, are those which figure with disproportionate prominence in the *Life*. Evidently Dicconson had the Nairne Papers before him at the time when he was working up the King's memoirs into the *Life*.

When the historian Hume went to Paris as Secretary to the British Embassy he, though a Protestant, was allowed, on account of his renown, access to the papers in the Scots College, which were perhaps by then no longer so jealously kept secret. In the 1770 edition of his *History* he added in a note that

> From the humanity and candour of the Principal of the Scots College in Paris he was admitted to peruse James II's Memoirs, kept there. They amount to several volumes, of small folio, all writ with that Prince's own hand and comprehending the remarkable incidents of his life, from his early youth till near the time of his death.

This is generally accepted as indisputable evidence that the manuscripts which Hume perused were the Memoirs and not the *Life*. But he left behind no transcripts. He surveyed but he kept no record.

We may dismiss briefly, as irrelevant or redundant for our purposes, the labours of James Macpherson. This gentleman, a Tory Member of Parliament and a paid supporter of King George III, having purchased from Mr Jernegan access to Mr Carte's collection of manuscripts, and having read and made extracts of his own from the *Life* in the Scots College, published in 1775 his so-called *Original State Papers*. Macpherson has been proved to have garbled his extracts and to have shown prejudice against the leaders of 1688. His conduct in respect of the Ossian poems, another of his literary exploitations, shows him capable of deliberate, elaborate, and well-executed forgery. Certainly his description of the Nairne Papers as "original" is misleading, and his repeated references to the *Life* as having been "*written in the king's own hand*" are untrue.

The great Mr Fox, while engaged upon a history of James II, was keenly interested in this controversy and one of the first to probe it. When he visited Paris in 1802, during the fleeting peace of Amiens, he sought out personally the heads of the Scots College. He was soon convinced of one at least of the many lies of which Macpherson stands convicted.

"With respect to Carte's extract," he wrote,

> I have no doubt but it is faithfully copied; but on this extract it is necessary to make an observation, which applies to all the rest, both

of Carte's and Macpherson's, and which leads to the detection of an imposture of the latter, as impudent as Ossian itself.

The extracts are evidently made, not from a journal, but from a narrative; I have now ascertained beyond all doubt, that there were in the Scotch College two distinct manuscripts, one in James's own hand consisting of papers of different sizes bound up together, and the other a sort of historical narrative, compiled from the former. The narrative was said to have been revised and corrected, as to style by Dryden the poet (meaning probably Charles Dryden the great poet's son) and it was not known in the College, whether it was drawn up in James's life, or by the direction of his son, the Pretender. I doubt whether Carte ever saw the original journal; but I learn, from undoubted authority that Macpherson never did; and yet to read his Preface, page 6 and 7 (which pray advert to,) one would have supposed, not only that he had inspected it accurately, but that all *his* extracts at least, if not Carte's also, were taken from it. Macpherson's impudence in attempting such an imposture, at a time when almost any man could have detected him, would have been in another man, incredible, if the internal evidence of the extracts themselves against him were not corroborated by the testimony of the principal persons of the College.[1]

Macpherson's credit stands so low that several authorities have suggested that he tampered with the Nairne Papers while they were in his temporary possession. But we have several indications that the bulk of them had been seen by other persons before they came into his hands or at least before their publication in 1775.[2]

We may, therefore, base ourselves on Carte's collection of the

[1] Charles James Fox to Laing, apud *James II*, introduction.

[2] For instance, in 1769 the Curator of the Bodleian Library nominated Thomas Monkhouse to inspect the "Carte Papers" in Jernegan's possession. Monkhouse's report and extract are preserved in the University archives, and proves that he examined volumes containing the Nairne manuscript in 1770.

The Earl of Hardwicke paid Jernegan £200 for the perusal of them for the purpose of his annotations on Burnet's *History of My Own Time*. Sir John Dalrymple, a Jacobite, in his preface to the second edition of his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, published in 1771, wrote:

"Since the first edition of the Memoirs was published, I have, fortunately, fallen upon a collection of papers in London which vouch almost all the new facts that are to be found in them. The papers I mean are those of the late Mr Carte, now in the possession of Mr Jernegan, who married his widow. They consist of very full notes, extracted from the "Memoirs of James II" now in the Scotch Collection at Paris, written by that Prince's own hand, and of many original State papers and copies of others of the Court of St Germains."

Although, as Fox surmised and as we shall prove, Dalrymple was misled in thinking that Macpherson's extracts were from the holograph autobiography, instead of being from Dicconson's version of it, it is obvious that he had seen the Nairne Papers of the Carte collection, substantially in the fo.m in which they were subsequently published by Macpherson.

Nairne Papers and on Dicconson's compilation of James's Memoirs and allow Macpherson to pass without further comment from the account.

We have assembled this mass of detail and disputation only for the purpose of sweeping it once for all out of the historical argument. A search of the Stuart papers at Windsor, rendered possible by the gracious permission of his present Majesty, has revealed a letter never before published or noticed by any of the historians of the last two centuries. This letter is written by Mr Thomas Inesse (or Inese), brother to Louis Inesse, and his successor as Principal of the Scots College, in 1740 to the same James Edgar, secretary to the Old Pretender, whose consequential letter of January 10, 1741, we have already quoted. It is of such far-reaching importance that it must be printed textually:

PARIS
17 *Octob.* 1740

HON^D SIR,

In my last of 11the Current I touched only by the by what concerns M. Carte's copying his late Matys Original Memoires, delaying to give you a more full account to be layd before the King, till M. Carte should have finisht his Copy, which taking more time than I thought it would, I shall put off no longer.

What I had chiefly to say is that judging by the singular privilege of H. Ms allowing M. Carte the use of the Originals, that H. Ms Intention was that his Copy of these Memoires should be in all its perfection. Now the Orig. Memoires having been at first all written upon papers of different Seizes such as his late Maty had about him or at hand during his Campagnes or in the different parts he happened to be; were in no kind of order till by his late Maties directions, my Brother arranged them and caused bind them up in three vols with references to mark the suitte [sequence]. Besides this, they are in some places by length of time and bad ink become almost illegible So that M. Carte was sometimes not a little puzzled to make them out: To remedy this I thought proper to communicate to him a fair Copy we have of these Memoires *ending, as the Orgls do, at the Restoration*[1] in 3 vols in 4°, upon the first Volume of which is the following Notte in my Brothers hand. . . . [Transcribed in 3 volumes in 4° from the Kings Original Memoires by M. Dryden the famous Poet, in the year 1686, and afterwards revised by his Majesty, and in Severall places corrected in his own hand.]

There are besides some other Markes upon this Copy of Mr Dryden

[1] Author's italics.

by which it would appear that A.D. 1686 when it was made it was making ready for the Press and probably it had been published, if the unhappy Revolution had not soon after fallen out.

This Copy is indeed very valuable it itself being made under his late Majesty's eye, and no doubt all the differences in it from the Original have been made by H. Ms. directions or by himself. Besides severall words or expressions written in H. Ms. own hand, the chief differences between this Copy and the Original consist in this that whereas in the Origl Memoires H M speaks always of himself in the third person e.g. The D. of York was born the 14 Octob. 1633 in this Copy of M. Dryden he is made always to speak in the first persone e.g. I was born 14 Octob. &c and so all over where there is mention of the Battles, Sieges, Marches where he was.

I leave to M. Carte himself to give a particular account of the Copies or Abstracts he is making of these Memoires of the late King and of the use to which he designs them; *our orders being only to communicate to him precisely what his order bears and no more.*[1] And therefore tho we have here besides the Original papers and Letters of the late King Since the Restoration, as they are Sett down in the Severall Inventories Sent to his Majesty by my Brother and by me, none of these have been communicated to M. Carte nor to any other, nor shall they be without an express order in Write from His Maty.

With the Same Caution and Secrecy we keep the late Queen Mother's life written by Fr. Gaill d. *and of the full life at large of the late B. King written by M. Dicconson upon his late Matys Memoires, Letters and Papers both before and Since the Restoration*[2] all which were by Special orders in write of his present Majesty, as well as two Boxes with H Ms papers of which M. Dicconson hath the Kyes ever Since the late Queen Mother's death in whose closet these papers were found and putt up into the two boxes by the late E. of Middleton, M. Dicconson and other Commissaries appointed by H.M. at the time.

I take the liberty to sett down this detail in order to refresh H. Ms memory to find more readily when any thing is required. I beg you will assure H.M. of my most dutifull & most profound respects and believe me ever Hod Sir Your most humble and most obedt Servitor

THO. INESE[3]

Here we have the fact established upon unimpeachable and responsible authority that King James's Memoirs ended at the Restoration in 1660. All the rest of the *Life* was compiled by Mr Dicconson some years after King James's death. All controversies about whether Carte, Macpherson, Dalrymple, or Hume saw the Memoirs or the *Life* are wholly irrelevant to the historical drama with which we are concerned.

[1] Author's italics. [2] Author's italics. [3] Stuart Papers at Windsor, MSS.

James's personal testimony "writ of his own hand" ended more than thirty years before the events affecting the conduct of Marlborough and other Revolution leaders. Instead of dealing with the evidence of the exiled King, who had lived in the centre of the affairs he described, we have only the assertions of Mr Dicconson, who had no personal knowledge of what took place, and compiled his history fifteen to twenty years after the crucial period had passed. Macaulay bases tens of pages of his history upon James's *Life*. He transcribes and translates into his own inimitable story-telling the charges made therein against Marlborough and others. Even so friendly a biographer as Wolseley tamely accepts the *Life* as if it were King James's personal handiwork. In reality friend and foe alike are resting, not on King James's Memoirs written at the time, but only upon the work of Mr Dicconson. Dicconson and the forlorn group of Jacobites among whom he lived had every motive known to the human heart to hate and traduce the English revolutionary leaders; and of all those leaders none more than Marlborough, who at the time when Dicconson was writing was at the height of his career. Yet everything that Dicconson chose to write has been accepted as if it were the contemporary testimony of King James and as if it were true. On these unsure foundations some of the greatest and most erudite scholars and writers of our language have erected that vast structure of calumny and distortion which has hitherto served as history.

Dicconson had in his possession some time after the year 1704 both the holograph Memoirs of James II which went no further than 1660 and the documents forming the Nairne Papers, and perhaps other documents of which we know nothing. He certainly had the power to record or suppress or alter as he thought fit the whole of the material; or to put upon it whatever construction he chose, or to invent or add anything he chose. James was dead; his two Secretaries of State, Melfort and Middleton, were dead; Nairne was dead; but the Jacobite clerk remained with a jumble of papers and the priceless but irrelevant holograph of the Memoirs of the King, now lost for ever.

Chapter Twenty-two

THE JACOBITE ILLUSION

WE now approach the most unhappy and questionable period in Marlborough's life. The peccadilloes of youth, the work he had to do as confidential servant of the Duke of York, his treasonable letter to the Prince of Orange, his desertion of James at Salisbury, are all capable of either excuse or vindication. Indeed, his conduct towards James was justified not only by his religious and political convictions, but even more by the broad and long interest of England. But it entailed consequences.

"Lord Churchill," says Hume in a severe passage,

> had been raised from the rank of a page, had been invested with the High Command in the army, had been created a peer, and had owed his whole fortune to the King's favour; yet even he could resolve during the present extremity to desert his unhappy Majesty, who had ever reposed entire confidence in him. This conduct was a signal sacrifice to public virtue of every duty in private life; and required ever after the most upright, disinterested and public-spirited behaviour to render it justifiable.[1]

Yet now we must record that opposition to King William, those intrigues with King James, which seem to stultify his former action, to rob it of its basis of conscientious scruple, and to arm his innumerable assailants with every weapon that indignant rectitude or implacable malice could desire. Moreover, the picture is not one to be painted in bold blacks and whites. We gaze upon a scene of greys shading indefinably, mysteriously, in and out of one another. A mere recital of facts and outlines would give no true description without a comprehension of the atmosphere. We have to analyse half-tones and discern the subtle planes upon which the subject depends for its interpretation. Finally we have, to some extent, to judge the work by standards different from those which now prevail. Nor shall we try to prove too much. Our task is to repel erroneous or exaggerated criticism, to separate censure from cant, to strip

[1] *History of England*, ii, 485.

prejudice of its malignancy, and to unmask imposture. And to do this with the recognition that when all is said and done, no complete justification will be found.

In judging the character of Marlborough the question arises whether his actions were dictated by undue self-interest. Reasonable care for a man's own interest is neither a public nor a private vice. It is affectation to pretend that statesmen and soldiers who have gained fame in history have been indifferent to their own advancement, incapable of resenting injuries, or guided in their public action only by altruism. It is when self-interest assumes a slavish or ferocious form, or when it outweighs all other interests in a man's soul, that the censures of history are rightly applied. That Marlborough, like most Englishmen, together with all the Revolution statesmen, should become estranged from the new Government; that he should quarrel personally with King William; that he should seek to safeguard himself in the increasingly probable event of a Jacobite restoration, are not in themselves, and under the conditions of the period, wrongful or odious behaviour. The test is whether he was false in intention or in fact to the cause of Protestantism and constitutional freedom, and above all whether the safety of England or the lives of her soldiers and sailors were jeopardized by his actions; and it is to these aspects that the attention of the reader will be directed.

In those days confidential communications between the chief actors on opposite sides across the frontiers of hostile states and the lines of warring armies were frequent. A polished veneer of courtesy and ceremony prevailed among the nobility, even in the field. Elaborate codes, apparently observed with effective good faith, regulated the exchange of prisoners and of hostages. Passes were issued to privileged individuals to traverse enemy territory. Trumpets came and went frequently between the armies on a wide variety of missions. Many of the combatants had been allies in former wars. Many of the opposing leaders were related by blood or marriage. All the royal houses were closely interwoven, and family ties subsisted to some extent in spite of the shifting political antagonisms. The Jacobites in England were numerous and influential. They were a definite, powerful party, in the bosom of which ceaseless conspiracies to bring back the rightful sovereign waxed and waned. Jacobite opinion, as such, was not proscribed by the Government. The cause could be openly avowed. There

was a regular political party with its clubs and adherents, ranging from law-abiding gentlefolk at the summit through every grade of disaffection to fanatical physical-force men and downright murderers at the bottom. The Jacobite circles were linked to the ordinary life of every class of the nation by innumerable ties, and nowhere was there a gulf unbridged. It was all a slippery slope.

King James and his family dwelt, refugees, by the throne of Louis XIV. They and their shadow Court, with its handful of Irish troops and Guards, its functionaries and its Ministers, were all dependent for their daily bread upon the bounty or policy of their protector. The vanity of Louis was gratified by the presence in his orbit of a suppliant monarch. He indulged to the full the easy chivalry of affluent pity. Sometimes, indeed, his sentiments for a brother monarch, in whose person not only the Catholic faith but even the Divine Right of Kings had been assaulted, carried him beyond purely French interests. But, in the main, a cool statecraft ruled. The exiled family at Saint-Germains depended for their treatment upon their usefulness in the Continental schemes of France. That usefulness for this purpose was measured by the strength and reality of their English connexions. They had, thus, the strongest inducements—and, indeed, compulsions—to magnify the importance and the intimacy of their British ties and the general vitality of the Jacobite cause. Their supreme object was to obtain from Louis a French fleet to carry them to England, and a French army to re-establish King James upon his throne. They therefore, in their unhappy plight, continually represented themselves to the French Government as being in the most confidential relations with the leading men in England, especially with the members of King William's Council. They developed every possible contact with English Jacobites and friends, real or pretended, across the Channel. They put their own gloss upon whatever news they could get, and served the result up—more often, perhaps, than was tactful—to the French Ministers. Always they laboured to paint a picture of an England longing for their return and ready to rise the moment a chance presented itself. Let the French supply the army and the ships, and they would make the attempt. Once they landed, all would be well. But the French Ministers were sceptical; they had many independent sources of information, and they had a different point of view.

This process continued for a long period. To and fro across the Channel sped the busy couriers and spies of the Jacobite Party,

and within a year of William's landing some sort of contact was re-established between the Revolution leaders—the former courtiers and servants of King James—and the new centre at Saint-Germains. The exiled officials hashed up the reports of their secret agents and the perpetual series of messages, rumours, and whispers, which reached them from across the Channel. Anything that tended to increase the belief of Louis in the reality and ardour of their party in England and Scotland was a godsend. The Earl of Melfort, brother of the Perth whose atrocities in Scotland have left him an evil fame, sat at the receipt of custom. His office was a factory of rosy reports, sustained by titbits of information, all served up to convince King Louis and comfort King James.

As early as 1689 Marlborough was reported to James as being dissatisfied with the new régime and anxious to make his peace with the old. But nothing definite was asserted until the beginning of 1691, about which Dicconson's *Life of James* sets forth at length a series of reports by three Jacobite agents—Mr Bulkeley, Colonel Sackville, and Mr Floyd, or Lloyd—of conversations which they declared they had had with Admiral Russell, Godolphin, Halifax, and Churchill.[1] That all these servants of King William allowed or invited Jacobite agents to visit them, and that conversations took place, may well be true. But Dicconson's version of what passed is at once malicious and absurd.[2] Upon this basis, the authenticity of which we have already examined, Macaulay tells a fine tale.

After describing the successive seductions of Russell and Godolphin he comes to Marlborough.

> But all the agents of the banished Court stood aloof from the deserter of Salisbury. That shameful night seemed to have for ever separated the false friend from the Prince whom he had ruined. James had, even in the last extremity, when his army was in full retreat, when his whole kingdom had risen against him, declared that he would never pardon Churchill, never, never. By all the Jacobites the name of Churchill was held in peculiar abhorrence; and, in the prose and verse which came forth daily from their secret presses, a precedence in infamy, among all the many traitors of the age, was assigned to him

[1] In the Jacobite correspondence English notables are always referred to only by the titles which they bore under King James, as William's creations were not recognized.

[2] It may be read in Clarke's (Dicconson's) *Life of James II*, which Macaulay states (ii, 55) is "The chief authority for this part of my history, . . . particularly the highly important and interesting passage which begins at page 444 and ends at page 450 of the second volume."

But the guilty villain was not so easily to be excluded from future favours.

> He therefore sent to beg an interview with Colonel Edward Sackville. Sackville was astonished and not much pleased by the message. . . . It was not without reluctance that the stanch royalist crossed the hated threshold of the deserter. He was repaid for his effort by the edifying spectacle of such an agony of repentance as he had never before seen. "Will you," said Marlborough, "be my intercessor with the King? Will you tell him what I suffer? My crimes now appear to me in their true light; and I shrink with horror from the contemplation. The thought of them is with me day and night. I sit down to table: but I cannot eat. I throw myself on my bed: but I cannot sleep."

Apparently, however, up till January 1690 he had still been able to drink; for the French archives record on similar authority that he, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, and two or three others had been present at a drinking-party with King William at which they drank the health of the monarchy, the Anglican Church, the reduction of Ireland, and the invasion of France. "A la fin ils se soulèrent de telle manière qu'ils n'y en eut pas un qui ne perdît toute connoissance."[1] ("In the end they got so drunk that there was not one that did not lose all consciousness.")

Macaulay makes Marlborough continue, "I am ready to sacrifice everything, to brave everything, to bring utter ruin on my fortunes, if only I may be free from the misery of a wounded spirit."

Hitherto Macaulay is more highly coloured than Dicconson. But Dicconson has qualities of his own. We may note the ecclesiastical flavour.

> Churchill was in appearance the greatest penitent imaginable. He begged of him [Sackville] to go to the King and acquaint him with his sincere repentance and to intercede for mercy, that he was ready to redeem his apostasy with the hazard of his utter ruine, his crimes apeareing so horrid to him that he could neither sleep, nor eat but in continual anguish, and a great deal to that purpose.

It is an unconscious contest in imaginative embroidery. "Colonel Sackville," says Dicconson,

> . . . resolved at the same time to search him [Marlborough] to the Quick and try whether by informeing them readily of what he knew, they might depend upon his sincerity as to what he pretended [promised]. . . . My Lord . . . without the least hezitation gave them both an account of all the forces, preparations and designes both in

[1] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 172, f. 13.

England, Scotland and Ireland, whither the Prince of Orange intended to go himself, if the French pressed not too hard upon the Confederates in Flanders, and that he hoped to reduce Ireland so soon as to be able to bring part of that Army into the Low Countrys that very Campaign; he gave likewise an account of the Fleet, and in fine of whatever was intended either by Sea or land, *which concurring with the informations they had from other hands*[1] was a great argument of his sincerity; . . . he desired instructions which way he might be serviceable, without being admitted into the King's secrets, owning that the vilanies he had commited, did but too justly debar him from expecting any such confidence; . . . he proffer'd to bring over the English troops that were in Flanders if the King required it, but rather proposed he should act in consert with many more who were intent upon the same thing, that is, to endeavour next Sessions to get all the foreigners sent out of the Kingdom which would bring home more English troops and those he hoped he could influence to better purpose; . . . he advised him [James] when he came, not to bring too numerous an Army, a French power, he sayd, was terrifying to the people; nevertheless a competent force was necessary; . . . it would neither be fair in him to propose, nor prudent in His Majesty to trust, to those alone who had used him so treacherously already, . . . and upon the whole, he appeared the most Sollicitous imaginable for the King's intrest, and the most penitant man upon earth for his own fault, say'd a thousand things to express the horrour he *had of his vilanies to ye best of Kings, and yt it would be impossible for him to be at rest*[2] *till* he had in some measure made an attonement, by endeavouring (tho with the utmost peril of his life) to restore his injured Prince and beloved Master. ". . . He would give up his life with pleasure if he could thereby recall the fault he had committed . . . that he was so entirely returned to his duty, and love to His Majesty's person that he would be ready with joy upon the least command to abandon Wife, Children and country to regain and preserve his esteem. . . ."

Even Macaulay loses faith in these absurdities; for, after having exploited them as offensively as possible, he snaps at the hands of Dicconson, from which he has hitherto fed with such relish. With a parting insult, he tells us:

The truth was that when Marlborough told the Jacobites that his sense of guilt prevented him from swallowing his food by day and taking his rest at night he was laughing at them. The loss of half a

[1] The italics are mine.

[2] This passage in Dicconson is said to be underlined by the Old Pretender, though the value of his evidence must be discounted by the fact that he was at the time of these events but four years old.

guinea would have done more to spoil his appetite and to disturb his slumbers than all the terrors of an evil conscience.

No one knows, of course, what Marlborough said or did not say. Dicconson—the sole authority—can only tell us what he thought fit to record of the Jacobite agents' reports of fifteen years before. All this is one-sided assertion. Marlborough never volunteered explanations or justification. He appeared unconscious that there was anything to explain.

To what extent he deceived the Jacobite agents with the fair words and pious assurances; to what extent they boasted the value of the fish they thought they had caught; to what extent Melfort and Nairne exaggerated the secret service information, the collection of which was their main duty, are mysteries; but in this case, as also with Godolphin, Russell, Shrewsbury, and others, we certainly have at one end of the chain an important personage anxious not to be too much hated or too much overlooked at Saint-Germains, and at the other an unhappy exile in no position to be vindictive or particular in receiving friendly overtures.

Marlborough's communications with the Jacobite Court, or with his sister's son, the Duke of Berwick, or with James's son, the Old Pretender, were no passing intrigue. They were a system. They were a lifelong policy—just so much and no more—pursued continually for a quarter of a century. Under King William there was no written correspondence. There are accounts of messages and conversations, of promises and assurances without number, many of which may be fabrications, but others which could not have been wholly invented and bear in part the stamp of truth.

In the first phase Marlborough's object, like that of the other Revolution leaders, was to obtain a formal pardon from the Exile, in the unpleasant but by no means improbable event of his restoration. This was a phase in the communications of which William was generally aware, which even had his acquiescence. The following extract from Ailesbury's *Memoirs* is significant.

> It is very certain that the King [William] gave leave to the Earl of Marlborough, my lord Godolphin, the Duke of Shrewsbury and Admiral Russell to correspond with my lord Middleton at St Germains. They infused into the King the great advantage that might arise to him by it, and on my conscience I believe it. The plausible pretext was that my lord Middleton should be deluded, that he should know nothing of what passed in England of high secret moment, but that they four would wire-draw all out of my Lord Middleton; and no

The reader should notice that in this interview it is Hooke who, according to his own naïve account, gives or confirms the valuable information that Berwick is to command in Spain, while Marlborough tells him nothing in return. But Hooke was quite content to be able to report to Saint-Germains that he had been kindly received by the great man, and had been told to visit Godolphin in his absence from time to time, and bring him any news of interest from Saint-Germains.

It is characteristic of Macpherson that, while he printed all the other Nairne Papers relating to Marlborough, he omitted this one. Yet this paper more than any other reveals what we believe to have been the only method of communication with Saint-Germains practised by Marlborough and the English Ministers: namely, interviews subsequently written out from memory by the Jacobite agents. This would explain the absence of any holograph letters in King James's archives. It explains much else besides.

There is, lastly, in the long story of Marlborough's relations with Saint-Germains a phase, possibly the least insincere of all, when he endeavoured to establish some kind of amicable relationship with the Old Pretender, "James III." And there are always great civilities and protestations of devotion to the exiled Queen. All baffling; all mystifying; truth and falsehood, pity and deception, intermingled; dual loyalties deliberately exploited. Was it not important for Saint-Germains to be able to tell Louis XIV that they were in close, secret, constant relationship with the Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's army? They would be grateful for that. It was a real service. It cost nothing. It did not hamper business. It all tended to create uncertainty. The French Government, keenly interested in Berwick's peace negotiations, might have their mind diverted from the defence of Lille and its citadel. This was all part of Marlborough's war-making; and also part of his system. And so, a month or perhaps a week later—a swift march, a sudden assault, thrusting out of a cloud of honeyed words and equivocation, changed fortunes in the field. Webs of intrigue, crossings, double-crossings, stratagems, contrivances, deceit; with smiles, compliments, nods, bows, and whispers—then *crash!* sudden reversion to a violent and decisive military event. The cannon intervene.

There is no disputing the validity of the Jacobite complaint, that they never got anything out of Marlborough except promises which were not made good, and information which arrived only when it was stale. Yet there was no moment at which they could

say, "He is only fooling us. He is only feeding us with trifles and smooth words." For there never was a moment when they could not nurse the hope that, if the Exile returned, the Captain-General would put him on the throne; or when they could dismiss the fear that in the teeth of his resistance all hope of return was ended. In the upshot they were disappointed. As things turned out, they got less than nothing at all. They were mocked with false hopes; placated with counterfeit coin; smothered with empty salutations. They were as much confused, perplexed, and kept continually uncertain as Tallard on the eve of Blenheim, or Villeroy on the morning of Ramillies, or as Villars before his lines were forced. A vast system of genuine shams, a prolonged relationship of deceits that were effective because they never excluded the possibility of being real: the whole of this prevailing over twenty-five years and expressed in terms of perfervid loyalty, with promises made, as they declare, of the highest service and of the darkest treachery. But nothing to show for it! Not a corporal's guard turned over! Not a picket conceded in the field; not a scrap of information that they did not know, or that was not public property already; but always hope and always delay, always disappointment—and then more hope. Marlborough betrayed nothing, but to the end no Jacobite agent, courtier, or Minister could ever feel sure he would not some day betray *everything* into their hands. Nor can we at this stage pursue the hypothesis of what he would have done if this or that had happened. If, for instance, upon the demise of Anne, James III had landed after declaring himself Protestant and being acclaimed by England, as William III had been after Torbay, would Marlborough have felt bound to die for the house of Hanover? The Jacobites could not tell at the time, and we certainly cannot to-day.

We must confine ourselves to what actually happened. Every account, every record, summed up, shows that the Jacobite Court were for a quarter of a century flattered, duped, baffled, and in the event ruined by an inscrutable and profound personality. They certainly had every reason to blacken the memory of the calm, deep, patient man who threaded his way almost unerringly through the labyrinth of dynastic, political, and military intrigues in five reigns, and who emerged at every decisive moment the successful champion of British interests, of Protestant interests, and of his own interests.

Let us, however, see what the final conclusions of the Court of Saint-Germains were. Here are some extracts from Dicconson.

It is hard, considering what had happened, to make a right judgment of their [King William's Ministers and Marlborough] intentions and whether they had any other aim in what they did than to secure themselves against a just resentment of an offended prince should he fortune to return by other means. . . .

Lord Dartmouth's proffer of service which he sent by Mr Lloyd, though it was probably more sincere, proved of as little use as the rest. . . .

For the Prince of Orange looking never the worse upon Lord Godolphin and Admiral Russell (an argument he had been no stranger to their practices) but it was a check on others who perhaps meant *better*; of which number whether my Lord Churchill was to be counted on or no is still a mystery and the vail is like to remain upon it.

Again:

Nevertheless the King found no efects of these mighty promisses, for his Majesty insisting upon his [Churchill's] offer of bringing over the English troops in Flanders, as the greatest service he could doe him, he excused himself under pretence there was some mistake in the message, that it would ruin all to make the troops come over by parcells, that his business was to gain an absolute power over them, then to doe all the business at once. . . .

Again:

My Lord Churchil himself in his letter the 13 of december[1] . . . tells the King, that he must not depend upon any other advantage by his Declaration, than to dispose the people to receive him when he came with a sutable force, and therefore begs of his Majesty not to venter with less than Five and Twenty thousand men, besides arms &c. for Seven thousand more. These were the putts off the King met with from these pretended friends, who never did him any essential good or themselves any harme, for if they were out of imployment, it passed for aversion to the government, and they made a merit of it; and a they found means of being readmitted, then it was represented as if mighty advantage to the King, their being in a better capacity of serveing him. . . .

Again:

Accordingly the next letter[2] which My Lord Churchil writ, he tells the King that My Lord [Shrewsbury] was so press'd to accept of his former imployment of Secretary of State, that he fear'd he could not resist, but that tho' he alter'd his condition he assured him he would never alter his inclinations; whereas in reality one of my Lord [Shrewsbury]'s principal advisers to this, was My Lord Churchil himself, that

[1] Non-existent.

[2] Non-existent.

he might do him the like good turn, and procure his readmission into favour too. . . .

We are also told how Admiral Russell and other naval officers tricked the King. If the British fleet missed the French fleet, they declared it was their loyalty to James. If they met it and beat it, they stood well with William. This picture is in the main true.

And again of Churchill:

> . . . however he continued his correspondence with the King, if not by letters at least by messages as long as his Majesty lived, but the Prince of Orange dying soon after, a new scene was open'd to him, in which he amazed the world with his conduct, and fortune; however, he still pretended a good will to make some reparation to the Son, for the former infidelities to the Father.[1]

We do not wish to press our advantage too far. We seek truth, not triumph. We affirm independently that the Revolution leaders all had the relations we have described and shall describe with the Court of Saint-Germains, and none so prolonged as those of Marlborough. But at this stage we challenge, as based on no evidence worth the name, all the details and descriptions of conversations reported through several hands, all abject or foolish expressions, and all shameful proposals or betrayals in so far as they rest upon Dicconson's so-called *Life* or the Memoirs of James II, "writ of his own hand."

The long succession of historians who follow each other like sheep through the gates of error are all agreed about Marlborough's profound sagacity and that self-interest was his motive power. Let us, then, try the case by these standards. What conceivable interest could he have had in bringing back James? At the best a contemptuous pardon and a justly ineradicable distrust. Of all the notables of England he had the least to hope and the most to fear from such a restoration. How eagerly would triumphant Jacobites, proud Tories, and infuriated Whigs have combined in such an event to drive into obscurity the double-dyed arch-traitor who had presumed to be the maker and un-maker of kings! What succour from his old master could he look for against such a storm? Exile, disgrace, or at best some pittance, some sinecure, was the most that magnanimity or indifference could bestow; and James was not the most magnanimous or forgiving of men. What chance had Marlborough but the Princess Anne? There, in the narrow circle of the Cockpit,

[1] Clarke, *Life of James II*, pp. 444 *seq.*

where long friendship and companionship reigned, where the bonds of union were only forged more tensely by external persecution or danger, lay the only hope. And that a great one! Why should he bring back James and his lusty son, in his own right or under a regency—under a jealous Council of State as a Catholic, or still more as a Protestant—and exclude for ever Anne from the succession? Why should he "abandon wife, children and country" for that? Never for one moment could he have entertained such inanities. We can hear him make his customary comment, "Silly! Silly!" The more sagacious, the more self-seeking he, the less harbourage such devastating contingencies could have found. From the closing years of Charles II, through the unceasing convulsions and confusions of this time, John and Sarah held on to Anne and staked their public existence upon her fortunes and her favour.

Chapter Twenty-three

THE FAMILY QUARREL

1691–1692

AT the end of October 1691 William landed at Margate from the wars, and all the way to London he was warmly welcomed by the people. They did not realize the failure of the Continental campaign, and the good news from Ireland roused their enthusiasm. Ginkel had defeated the Irish with an immense slaughter at Aughrim. Limerick had surrendered. The Irish hero Sarsfield had made terms which allowed him to carry eighteen thousand of the best Irish troops out of the country into the French service. It seemed that the Irish troubles were at an end; at least, all resistance was crushed. But the national rejoicing at the local victory was inspired by the hope of an early general peace. Of this there was no prospect. The most costly years of the first part of the world war still lay ahead.

The King brought with him in his coach Bentinck and Marlborough; apparently all were on cordial terms. At Shooter's Hill the coach overturned. Bentinck and Marlborough were hurt. Marlborough, indeed, seems to have been dazed, for he declared that his neck was broken. William, who was only shaken, reassured him that this could not be so, "since he could still speak." The party, somewhat battered, were able to make their entry into London amid cheering crowds.[1]

Nevertheless the realities of the situation might well cause the King anxiety. The injustice done to English officers and the implied insult to the Army aroused strong feelings throughout English society. These vexations were shared by the English Ministers, through whom and with whom William was forced to govern, and especially by that central group to which he naturally inclined. They saw that the sovereign who had invited them to serve him secured himself against his new subjects by foreign troops and foreign commanders of English troops. They saw themselves threatened in their own position. Both Houses of Parliament, the

[1] *C.S.P.* (*Dom.*), 1690–91, 547; Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 477.

rank and fashion of London, the officers and the troops themselves, all felt that their country was not being treated fairly or honourably by the Dutch Prince whose aid they had invoked. As long as the Irish war continued, or whenever a French invasion threatened, these natural sentiments were perforce repressed; but at all other times they broke forth with pent-up anger. Although Parliament steadily voted heavy supplies for war against France by sea and land, the use of British troops on the Continent became unpopular; and the pressure upon the King to dismiss his Dutch guards and Dutch favourites was unceasing. Indeed, at the end of 1691 the position of William and his Dutch clique seemed superficially as precarious as had been that of James and his Catholic camarilla three years before.

Marlborough, already offended by what he regarded as ill-usage, convinced that it was William's policy to keep him in the shade, and more excusably vexed by the futile conduct of the campaign in Flanders, did not hesitate to show his hostility. To all this movement which flared up in Parliament and the higher circles of London that winter he lent an influence which was soon found to be potent. He criticized the King openly. He welcomed the tale-bearing which carried his caustic comments to the royal ear. He said at Lord Wharton's before a company that in the previous reign James had been so eager to fill the army with Irishmen that the only question asked was, "Do you speak English?" Now all that had happened was that the word "Dutchmen" was changed for "Irishmen." He spoke of Bentinck as "a wooden fellow." He remonstrated with William to his face upon his gifts of Crown property to Bentinck and Zulestein. "With great grief of heart many of his faithful servants," he said,

> among whom he requested the honour to be included, saw the royal munificence confined to one or two lords and these foreigners. . . . As far as he was concerned he had no cause to complain; he was amply provided for in the post he held under his Majesty; but in duty bound he felt obliged to lay before him what he ought to know, because he could not otherwise be apprized of means to remedy the disasters that might be the result of such unpopular conduct.[1]

Perhaps he did not express himself so elegantly; but this was the gist of it. He may, indeed, have said more. The King indignantly turned his back upon him.

William was accustomed, as the records show, to tolerate very plain speaking from the English notables. They wrote him long

[1] *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*, p. 31.

lectures on his political mistakes. The Whigs clamoured incessantly for all the offices because they had never abandoned their principles, and the Tories because they had abandoned them all and much regretted it. William's relations with Marlborough, though strained, were not broken by mere words. When the commands for the next year's campaign were being decided, he designed to take him to Flanders as Lieutenant-General attached to his own person. Marlborough demurred to this undefined position. He did not wish to be carried round Flanders as a mere adviser, offering counsel that was not taken, and bearing responsibility for the failures that ensued. He craved leave to remain at home, unless he was required at least to command the British troops, as in the past year. But the King had offered them to Ginkel, and afterwards bestowed them, with lamentable results, upon Count Solms.

Meanwhile Marlborough began indirectly to stir the House of Commons for an address to the Crown on the subject of the Employment of Foreigners, and he proposed himself to move a similar motion in the House of Lords. Widespread support was forthcoming. It even appeared likely that the motion would be carried by majorities in both Houses. The King saw himself about to be requested to dismiss his Dutch followers and favourites from all English offices, and to send back to Holland the five thousand Dutch guards upon whom he relied as his ultimate security. This was unmistakably a hostile proceeding. It was perfectly lawful; it might be thought even healthy; and nowadays, when happily the sovereign reigns but does not govern, would be fought out as an ordinary matter of domestic controversy. But at the end of the seventeenth century all opposition wore the guise of faction, and was readily regarded by the Crown as disloyalty or even treason. Moreover, Marlborough's activities did not end with Parliament. He was the leading British general. "His courage, his abilities, his noble and winning manner, the splendid success which had attended him on every occasion on which he had been in command, had made him," says Macaulay, "in spite of his sordid vices, a favourite with his brethren in arms." Undoubtedly many officers of various ranks resorted to him and loudly expressed their resentment at the favour shown to the Dutch. The "sordid vices" showed themselves, we are told, in the fact that he never entertained them with meat or drink.[1] His influence was exerted on their minds, and not, as was

[1] "Il ne donnoit jamais à manger (ce qui n'etoit pas le moyen de gagner les officers Anglais)." (News-letter in Denbigh Papers, *H.M.C.*, vii, 220.)

expected in those days, upon their stomachs. In spite of this characteristic omission, he had a great public and personal following in both Parliament and the Army at the beginning of 1692.

The general unrest among the high personnel of the Court and Government could not remain secret from the King. He certainly became aware that during 1691 most of those who surrounded him, to whom he owed much and without whom he could not govern England, were in some sort of communication with the rival he had ousted, and who sought in turn to dethrone him. But he had a far better comprehension of the forces at work than any of his posthumous literary champions. He knew that he was driving England very hard, and forcing upon its Parliamentary system and society treatment to which his own Dutch oligarchy would never have submitted. He could imagine the attitude of "Their High Mightinesses" if purely Dutch offices, Dutch estates, and Dutch commands had been lavished upon Englishmen. He did not therefore resent as strongly as his later admirers have done the double-dealing by which he was encompassed. He accepted it as a necessary element in a situation of unexampled perplexity. He tolerated perforce the fact that all his principal English counsellors were reinsuring themselves against a break-up of his government or his death on the battlefield. He continued to employ all these men in great offices of State and confidence about his person. He calculated with shrewd wisdom that, though they might turn against him as they had turned against James, yet they would not compromise the two main issues which had made them all his reluctant bedfellows; and he saw almost insuperable difficulties in their being able to dissociate the cause of James from the causes of Popery and France.

He did not, therefore, unduly trouble himself when Godolphin told him of the presents and tokens of affection which he was sending to Mary of Modena. He listened coolly when his Ministers described to him questions put to them by Jacobite agents and the answers they had given. It is a well-known practice of counter-espionage to give not only false or stale information to an enemy agent, but within certain limits true information to gain his confidence, with the intent thereafter to mislead the more. Many of the spying go-betweens of war or politics, then as now, imparted secrets, besides searching for them. William knew, or at least suspected, that Shrewsbury was in touch with Saint-Germains through his notorious mother; yet, as we shall see, again and again he implored Shrewsbury to take or retain the highest offices. He

knew that Russell had made his peace with James; yet he kept him in command of the fleet, and was to find his confidence vindicated at the battle of Cape La Hogue. He knew that Marlborough preserved the family contacts with his nephew the Duke of Berwick, and that his wife corresponded with her sister, the Duchess of Tyrconnel. He probably knew that Marlborough had obtained his pardon from James by persuading the Princess Anne to send a dutiful message to her father. None the less he thought that the magnet of the Protestant cause and resistance to France would hold these men and others in the essentials to their duty, and that in the end it would be James, and not himself, who would be deceived. He proved right; and it may well be that his wise tolerance and prudent blind eye were the perfection of his statecraft. Meanwhile he relied on his Dutch Guards, and saw to it that no Englishman gained the control of the Army. After all, he was getting a lot out of England for his Continental schemes, of which these ignorant islanders, as he deemed them, only dimly saw the importance.

Up to this point, according to their own accounts, the Jacobites had been extremely well pleased to see all this discontent gathering against the Government. It was already whispered in their secret circles that Marlborough also had made his peace with James. They nursed the hope that this powerful man was working for a restoration. The Houses of Parliament would make demands upon the King which he could not accept, and the Army under Marlborough would see that no violence was done to the Houses of Parliament. They looked forward to a crisis as the result of which, without the accursed aid of French bayonets, the rightful King might be restored by British votes and British arms, and remount his throne under the sword and shield of "the deserter of Salisbury." We have already shown the absurdity of this illusion. It did not dawn upon the Jacobites until the New Year. Then they suddenly remembered the Princess Anne and the small, devoted group at the Cockpit. So, then all this movement and focus of discontent from which they had expected so much, to which they had contributed what weight their party had was not to be for their benefit! On the contrary, if it succeeded it would exclude James for ever from the throne and would ensure the Protestant succession under Anne, with Marlborough, whose stature and force were already beginning to be understood, as her Captain-General. Their fury knew no bounds. Without consulting King James, who was dreaming that his former skilful servant of so many years would regain him his

crown, they went to Bentinck with tales of a vast and imminent conspiracy.

There is no evidence worthy of the name that Marlborough ever plotted the substitution of Anne for William and Mary. The obstacles were enormous. The risks, if not beyond his daring, were condemned by his practical good sense. It is probable that he had in view nothing more than the placing of the Princess Anne at the head of a combination of all parties, and the consequent assertion of his own power in the State for its great advantage. But though nothing so definite as a *coup d'état* had emerged in Marlborough's mind, he certainly sought to assemble and combine all forces hostile to the Government of the day, which in those days was indistinguishable from the King himself. It was for this reason above all others that he wished at this time to stand well with the Jacobites, and carry them with him as far as they would go. Like other Leaders of Opposition in later days, he would not willingly discard any factor that would add weight to his movement. Thus he no doubt allowed the eager Jacobite agents to lead James to believe that he was working in his interests. For the rest he certainly marched forward along roads which led into country where constitutional battles might have to be fought, which at every stage would have opened a wider prospect and raised graver issues. From these hazards, if the events had progressively favoured his advance, he would by no means have shrunk. He was a most audacious man, and not one to assign limits to success. When there has been one revolution there may well be another. He thought and felt about politics as he did about war, in terms of combinations, and of forces moving up to this point or that, and then a trial of strength and skill, and a new view of the situation thereafter.

When William heard from Bentinck what the Jacobites had disclosed, he was seriously alarmed and angered, but not for the reason which is usually assigned. He may have noticed for himself that Shrewsbury, Russell, and Godolphin had begun to be less attentive to the Queen than to the Princess Anne. The Cockpit had become a meeting-place for many important personages. William had good information of much that passed there; for Lady Fitzharding, Anne's second lady-in-waiting, was in the closest touch with her sister Elizabeth Villiers, his reputed mistress and intimate friend. He therefore had some confirmation from another angle of the lurid exaggerations of the Jacobites.

A movement in favour of the Princess Anne seemed to William

far more dangerous than any that concerned James. He saw the blunt facts to which so many eminent writers have been purblind. He was never afraid of Marlborough's trying to bring back James. He understood only too well where Marlborough's interests lay. He was content that James should be fooled. Of all his perils the Jacobite invasion, the most paraded in the history books, gave him the least anxiety. Quite a different mood stole over him when he saw or imagined Parliament, the Army, and the Princess Anne—a fatal trident—in the hand of Marlborough, pointed at his heart. Macaulay says, "William was not prone to fear, but if there was anyone on earth that he feared, it was Marlborough." He had discerned at first sight the qualities, military and political, of this ambitious, aggrieved, outspoken, calculating, bland, and redoubtable personality. He was conscious of the fire that burned within that bold heart. He knew that his own policy obliged him to deny his great subject fair scope for his genius. He expected reprisals. There is a double-edged significance in the remark which the King made in the presence of a group of nobles at Court, that "he had been treated so infamously by Marlborough that had he not been a king, he would have felt it necessary to demand personal satisfaction."[1] There are mutual injuries which efface differences of rank and station, and arouse in generous spirits the desire for an equal combat. We are to find a happier sequel for William's cause and Marlborough's fame.

These griefs on both sides—in all conscience serious enough—between the men were now to receive feminine aggravation. King William was profoundly disturbed at the suggestions of intrigue, or even plot, to transfer the crown to Princess Anne. But his indignation was surpassed by that of the Queen. That her own sister should be made the instrument to thrust her from the throne and usurp it herself was indeed intolerable, and what step was more urgent than to preserve that sister from the influence—nay, possession—that dominated her and made her the battering-ram of such fell designs? Upon Sarah, therefore, fell the anger of the Queen.

The feeling about the royal grants had rankled for three years. In its sequel William had treated Marlborough ill, and Marlborough had felt resentment against William. The King, new-made and but lately an armed usurper, was the fountain not only of honours, which are minor, but of opportunity. He had measureless means

[1] Reported by Bonnet, the Brandenburg envoy, and quoted by Ranke, *History of England*, vi, 177. *Cf.* Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 489.

of repaying what he considered family insubordination. The Princess Anne loved her husband dearly. They lived the closest married life together. She believed that he was a warrior capable of leading fleets and armies. He was in fact a good, brave, soldierly simpleton. His heart was with the Protestant princes in their war against "the overweening power of France." He sought to serve, if he could not command. He went uninvited with the King to Ireland in 1690. William treated him with unwarrantable contempt. He excluded him from his coach, to which his rank as husband to Anne, the heiress-presumptive to the throne, entitled him. Although the round-shot which grazed and wounded the King during the reconnaissance on the eve of the Boyne had passed almost as near to his brother-in-law, William left him ignored to trundle along with the armies.[1] In 1691 the poor Prince, not wishing to expose himself to more of such treatment, volunteered for service at sea without command. In those days soldiers and civilian landsmen went afloat without hesitation, and were even entrusted with important duties —sometimes without misadventure. Prince George made his request to the King on the latter's departure for Flanders. William embraced him, but said nothing. "Silence in such cases," says Sarah,

> being generally taken for consent, the Prince prepared his equipage and sent everything on board. But the King, it afterwards appeared, had left orders with the Queen that she should neither suffer the Prince to go to sea nor yet forbid him to go, if she could so contrive matters as to make his staying at home his own choice.[2]

Sarah was again invited to implement this delicate policy. Of course she refused point-blank. It was certainly asking too much of the Prince who had charged so bravely and rescued his brother in the battle with the Swedes to withdraw from the naval campaign without any explanation but his own change of mind. A direct order must be given. It was given.

[1] "The King never took more notice of him than if he had been a page of the Backstairs nor he was never once named in any Gazett, tho I am apt to think the bullet that so kindly kissed the King's shoulder was as near to his Royal Highness." ("An Account of King William and Queen Mary's Undeserv'd Ill Treatment of her Sister, the Princess of Denmark," by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.) This manuscript, of which copies exist at Blenheim and Althorp, is an account written by Sarah for the benefit of Mrs Burnet, who "had such a violent Passion for Queen Mary." It can be dated *circa* 1702–4. As the account of William III's reign given in the *Conduct* is merely a reduced version of the account given in this manuscript, it proves that for this period the *Conduct* is almost a contemporary document.

[2] *Conduct*, p. 39.

By these petty incivilities playing upon the strongest sentiments of important personages King William added needlessly to his many difficulties. Anne was a very real person. She was by no means the catspaw she has so often been depicted. She moved on broad, homely lines. She was devoted to her religion, to her husband, and to friends whose fidelity she had proved. It cannot be doubted at all that she would have faced poverty, exile, imprisonment, or even death with placid, unconquerable resolution for the sake of any of them. Once she got set, it took years to alter her. She was not very wise nor clever, but she was very like England. Now she was, as she conceived it, assailed by her sister and by her sister's husband, whose title to the throne she had willingly completed. She saw clearly what the Marlboroughs had risked and sacrificed for her. Her heart flowed out in love for Sarah and in admiration for John. All those slow, simple qualities which afterwards made her reign as glorious in the history of the British Empire as those of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria now displayed themselves.

Therefore when, early in January 1692, the Queen, hot upon the news of the alleged conspiracy and the wicked intrigues of Lord Marlborough in Parliament and the Army—nay, and with Saint-Germains too, if the truth were known—summoned Anne to her presence and ordered her to dismiss Sarah, she found herself confronted with inexpugnable resistance. The Queen opened upon the enormity of Anne's giving Sarah—that mischief-maker, that breeder of dissension in the royal family, the wife of a dangerous man harassing or betraying the King—an annuity of £1000 a year from her Parliamentary grant. It was the crowning abuse. Was it for this that Parliamentary grants were made? Now we can see why the King should have been trusted to provide what was right for his relations. Sarah must be dismissed forthwith. Anne, who was expecting another baby, met the assault with silent fortitude. From time to time she uttered a few words of phlegmatic negation. In the presence of invincible refusal Mary lost her temper, raised her voice, threatened to deprive her of half her Parliamentary grant—which was certainly not in her power. The talk became an altercation, both sides having a self-convincing case. The courtiers drew back in shocked agitation. The two sisters parted in the anger of what proved to be a mortal estrangement.[1]

The next morning at nine o'clock Marlborough, discharging his functions as Gentleman of the Bedchamber, handed the King his

[1] *Conduct*, pp. 83–84.

shirt, and William preserved his usual impassivity. Two hours later Nottingham delivered to Marlborough a written order to sell at once all the offices he held, civil and military, and consider himself as from that date dismissed from the Army and all public employment, and forbidden the Court. No reasons were given officially for this important stroke. The Court and Parliament were left to speculate whether it had been impelled by the dispute observed between the two Princesses on the night before, or whether it arose out of Marlborough's House of Commons activities, or whether some graver cause lay behind. The topic for some weeks excited all minds, and, as may be imagined, there was no lack of explanations. Surmise was acid but not entirely ill-informed. Count Stratemann, the Minister of the Empire, wrote to Vienna on February 8:

> As Marlborough did not become Quartermaster-General after the taking of Kinsale, he first attempted to stir up the English people against the Government by complaints that all the higher Army commands were only for foreigners, since the command in England and Scotland was in the hands of the Duke of Leinster, Count Schomberg; that in Ireland under Ginkel, that of the English forces in Flanders under Count Salm [Solms], and according to Churchill the British had nothing to console themselves with. Secondly, in public assemblies he had accused the King of ingratitude, and said that he could neither punish nor reward. Thirdly, Marlborough had tried, by means of his wife, who is chief lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Denmark, to cause discord between the Queen and the Princess. Finally, what is still more important, despite the fact that he had betrayed King James, he had endeavoured to conciliate that monarch again.[1]

Another explanation has lived because of a telling story attached

[1] Translated from the reports to Vienna in the appendix to Klopp, *Der Fall de Hauses Stuart*, vi, 375.

Mr Atkinson considers that "the most satisfactory explanation is that which represents the King as telling Nottingham that he had disgraced Marlborough for fomenting discord and disaffection in the Army and for his correspondence with Saint-Germains. He added 'he has rendered such valuable service that I have no wish to press him too hard.'" There is nothing to object to in this. But Mr Atkinson cites Wolseley (ii, 263) as his authority. Wolseley bases himself upon Vol. XI, No. 11, of "Tracts in the Athenæum Library." Students of history will be surprised to learn what this tract is. It is one of the lampoons published against Marlborough in 1711 under the title *Oliver's Pocket Looking Glass.* It is anonymous; but the style is similar to Mrs Manley's productions already noticed in an earlier chapter, and evidently comes from the same factory of party propaganda. That such a piece of trash issued nineteen years after the event should be described by one friendly historian on the authority of another as "the most satisfactory explanation" illustrates the flimsiness of the foundations upon which the most conscientious writers are content to rely.

to it. The King is said to have made Marlborough privy with only Danby and Shrewsbury to a plan for the attack upon Dunkirk. News of this intention, we are told, had reached the enemy through the Duchess of Tyrconnel, and the project had to be abandoned on account of the French counter-preparations. William, much incensed at this breach of faith, asked the three lords to whom alone he had confided the secret whether they had told anyone of it. Marlborough's answer was, "Upon my honour, Sire, I told it to nobody but my wife." "I did not tell it to mine," was the King's rejoinder. It was commonly supposed, says Wolseley, that Sarah had informed her sister, by whom it was communicated to James and through him to the French Court.

Wolseley cites various authorities for this allegation,[1] his chief being Horace Walpole, gossiping years after Marlborough's death. He offers in confirmation Burnet, who does not mention Dunkirk; Lord Dartmouth, who likewise does not name Dunkirk; and Carleton, who tells the same tale in his *Memoirs*, but in reference to a projected attack the same year upon Brest! Despite this complete absence of trustworthy sources, a long string of writers have adopted the story. If it was true, certainly it was not a case of indiscretion. Sarah knew how to keep secrets. If anything leaked out through her it was intentional and at Marlborough's instigation; altogether an odious act. But be patient.

The design against Dunkirk was not formed till August 1692, nor that against Brest till 1694. Marlborough's exclusion from the Council and the Court was in January 1692. William did not speak to him again till 1695. It is therefore rather difficult to fix a date for the King's pungent rebuke. There was, in fact, no moment when such a conversation could have taken place. The dialogue itself is as old as the hills. It is one of those anecdotes which travel down from generation to generation and, if they seem to fit, are fastened by gossips to the names of prominent people who are under the frown of power.

Marlborough took his dismissal, and the abuse, deserved and undeserved, let loose upon him in the highest circles, with unconcern. He had deliberately courted a breach with the King. He may have been surprised that his influence, connexions, services, and ability had not counted for more: evidently he had overrated their value. But he was not the man to take a course of action without counting the cost: there is no record of any complaints, or even comments,

[1] Wolseley, ii, 265. His reference is to the 1734 edition of Burnet.

uttered by him. His political position was not immediately affected. Parliamentary and public opinion as a whole considered that he had been ill-used, and that he had suffered for standing up for the rights of Englishmen against the Dutch and foreign favourites. His chief associates—the greatest men of the day—were offended. Shrewsbury let his disapproval be known; Godolphin threated to retire from the Government. Admiral Russell, now Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, went so far as to reproach King William to his face with having shown ingratitude to the man who had "set the crown upon his head." William, who with some reason only trusted Russell more than Marlborough because he feared him less, preserved an obdurate silence.

Anne's distress was acute. She was convinced that the husband of her friend and guide had suffered on her account. She did not attend the Court at Kensington for three weeks, and when at length she did so, she went accompanied by Sarah. This was indeed a step of hardihood on the part of both women. The courtiers were aghast. The Queen, not unreasonably, saw herself affronted. She wrote her sister a long and vehement letter of remonstrance, appeal, and command.

> . . . Never anybody was suffered to live at Court in my Lord Marlborough's circumstances. I need not repeat the cause he has given the King to do what he has done, nor his [the King's] unwillingness at all times to come to such extremities, though people do deserve it. . . .
>
> . . . It is very unfit that Lady Marlborough should stay with you, since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he ought not.
>
> I think I might have expected you should have spoke to me of it. And the King and I both believing it, made us stay [forbear] thus long. But seeing you was so far from it, that you brought Lady Marlborough hither last night, makes us resolve to put it off no longer, but tell you she must not stay, and that I have all the reason imaginable to look upon your bringing her as the strangest thing that ever was done. Nor could all my kindness for you, which is ever ready to turn all you do the best way at any other time, have hindered my showing you so that moment, but I considered your condition, and that made me master myself so far as not to take notice of it then.
>
> But now I must tell you it was very unkind in a sister, would have been very uncivil in an equal, and I need not say I have more to claim. Which though my kindness would make me never exact, yet when I see the use you would make of it, I must tell you I know what is due to me, and expect to have it from you. 'Tis upon that account I tell you

plainly Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances [in which] her Lord is.

. . . I will end this with once more desiring you to consider the matter impartially and take time for it. I do not desire an answer presently [at once], because I would not have you give a rash one. I shall come to your drawing-room to-morrow before you play, because you know I cannot make one [of the party]. At some other time we shall reason the business calmly, which I will willingly do, or anything else that may show it shall never be my fault if we do not live kindly together. Nor will I ever be other by choice, but your truly loving and affectionate sister.

Anne replied firmly the next day, saying among other things:

Your care of my present condition is extremely obliging. And if you would be pleased to add to it so far as on my account to recall your severe comment [about Sarah] (as I must beg leave to call it in a matter so tender to me and so little reasonable as I think to be imposed upon me that you would scarce require it from the meanest of your subjects), I should ever regard it as a very agreeable mark of your kindness to me. And I must as freely own that as I think that this proceeding can be for no other intent than to give me a very sensible mortification, so there is no misery that I cannot readily resolve to suffer rather than the thoughts of parting with her.[1]

The Princess had hoped that her uncle Rochester would take this letter, but he had no intention of prejudicing his future by mingling in this dispute loaded with danger for all but the principals. By way of answer the Lord Chamberlain was directed to forbid Sarah to continue at the Cockpit. This was decisive, but in a manner different from that in which Queen Mary had expected. Anne resolved to share the banishment of her friend. Although she was every day expecting her confinement, she borrowed Sion House from the Duke of Somerset and transported herself and her household there with the utmost expedition.

The King and Queen now vented their disapproval in a series of very small actions. They endeavoured to persuade the Duke of Somerset to reclaim his house; he regretted that as a gentleman he was unable to do so. They withdrew her guards from the Princess, and deprived her of all salutes and ceremonies. Later on, when she went to Bath, they even went so far as to make the Secretary of State write to the local mayor—a tallow-chandler, Sarah calls him —that he was not to accompany her officially to church. These puerilities humiliated only their authors. Anne gained a wide

[1] *Conduct*, pp. 43 *seq.*, letters dated February 5 and 6, 1692.

measure of public sympathy, and the Queen was wounded to learn that it was commonly said that she had no natural feeling for her own kin, neither for her father nor for her only sister.

We cannot wonder that Anne, pursued in so many petty ways and seeing her cherished friends ruined, as she thought, for her sake by the malice of her sister and the King, should have used in her intimate letters to Sarah bitter expressions about William. Macaulay says that she "called her brother-in-law sometimes the abortion, sometimes the monster, sometimes Caliban," and describes this as "the style of a fishwoman." The remark is mainly interesting as contemporary evidence of the high standard of erudition among the early Victorian fishwomen. The two sisters met only once again. After Anne had been delivered of a child which almost immediately died, the Queen visited her at Sion House; but this was only to renew her command that Sarah should be dismissed. Anne, who was still weak and quivering from her labour and grieving for her dead baby, refused as resolutely as ever. These, except for some cold and formal letters, were the last words which passed between them.

Sarah was deeply concerned by the formidable hostilities which centred upon her personality. Her own letters do not survive, but we can guess their purport from Anne's replies. Again and again in these months of common disgrace and calamity (as it appeared to them) the Princess wrote to her friend, exhorting, commanding, imploring her on no account to suggest that she should relieve the situation by her departure.

> The last time he [the Bishop of Worcester] was here I told him that you had several times desired that you might go from me, and I repeated the same thing again to him. For you may easily imagine I would not neglect doing you right on all occasions. But I beg it again for Christ Jesus' sake that you would never name it any more to me. For be assured, if you should ever do so cruel a thing as to leave me, from that moment I shall never enjoy one quiet hour. And should you do it without asking my consent (which if I ever give you may I never see the face of Heaven), I will shut myself up and never see the world more, but live where I may be forgot by human kind.

And again, at the end of a long letter:

> Dear Mrs Freeman, farewell: I hope in Christ that you will never think more of leaving me for I would be sacrificed to do you the least service and nothing but death could ever make me part with you. For if it be possible I am every day more and more yours.[1]

[1] *Conduct*, pp. 75, 81.

Did some protecting genius of England inspire Anne's generous, faithful heart? For surely it was in these fires of adversity, and almost persecution, that the links were forged by which the smallest and the strongest executive our country has ever known in the modern age was one day to be gripped together. The Cockpit friendships were the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise gleaming among the nations.

Chapter Twenty-four

THE TOWER

1692–1693

MEANWHILE the march of events was unfavourable both to the national and personal interests of Marlborough and to the vast Continental combinations of William. No sooner had the King set out upon the wars than the imminent menace of invasion fell upon the island he had left denuded of troops. Louvois had always been sceptical, and even scornful, of a Jacobite restoration; but Louvois was dead, and Louis was freed from the trammels of his famous War Minister. Although his best opportunities had passed with the end of the Irish war and the Scottish revolts, he now planned a descent upon England. The French Channel and Mediterranean fleets, together with a multitude of transports and store-ships, were concentrated in the Norman and Breton ports. An expeditionary army of ten thousand desperate Irishmen from Limerick and ten thousand French regulars was assembled around Cherbourg. James was to be given his chance. Saint-Germains had for two years oppressed the French War Office with their assertions that England was ripe and ready for a restoration. Russell would betray or divert the English fleet; Marlborough would answer for such parts of the Army as remained at home; the Princess Anne would reassure the Church of England. The Jacobites of the northern counties were under arms; the merchants of the City were favourable; the temper of the English people was rancorously hostile to the Dutch. William was now in Flanders, and once the true King landed—with an adequate force—he would drive in his coach to Whitehall. Now was the time when all these assertions so confidently reiterated by the unhappy exiles, so buoyed up by fond hopes, so backed by distortion, fabrication, and forgery, would be put to the test. James's opportunity had come.

It was not until the middle of April, from important papers captured on a small vessel, that the French designs became known to the English Government. Feverish but vigorous preparations were made for defence by land and sea. Some regiments were

brought from Ireland, others recalled from Flanders, and the English dockyards resounded with the preparation of the fleets. Despite stubborn adverse Jacobite currents, the nation had but one idea—to repel the French Papist invaders and above all the despised and hated Irish. James's declaration, framed by Melfort, "the evil genius of the house of Stuart," as he has been well called, apprised the nation of its peril. All the old arrogance, religious and political, and a new vindictiveness to pay off recent scores, were reflected in this wanton document. Large numbers of persons, ranging from the greatest nobles to the rough, ignorant fishermen who had manhandled their sovereign upon his flight to Faversham, were specifically excluded from the amnesty. Marlborough's name figured among the proscribed; but this, we are assured by the Jacobites, was only from a desire not to compromise the delicacy of his position. As upon the approach of the Spanish Armada, all England was alert. But everything turned upon the Admiral. Russell, like Marlborough, had talked with the Jacobite agents: William and Mary feared, and James fervently believed, that he would play the traitor to his country and his profession. James was sure that the fleet was on his side, and had furnished Versailles with lists of the admirals and captains on whom he counted. Now would be proved what substance there was in all these tales. Would that every Jacobite pretension could be brought to an equally conclusive trial!

According to the Jacobites, Russell bluntly told their agent, Floyd, that, much as he loved James and loathed William's Government, if he met the French fleet at sea he would do his best to destroy it, "even though King James himself were on board." He kept his word. "If your officers play you false," he said to the fleetmen on the day of battle, "overboard with them, and myself the first." We have no doubt that Marlborough, his friend and fellow-intriguer, would have done the same with the soldiers had he had them in command. But his lot was hard. An age of revolutions and conspiracies, when all foundations quaked, had produced a tribe of professional plot-denouncers. Titus Oates, living in retirement upon his Government pension, held a veritable school for the making of bogus plots from the exposure of which much wealth and celebrity might be gained. Moreover, there was no lack of material. A rascal named Fuller had already this year from his debtors' prison offered blood-curdling revelations to Parliament, and had been exposed and convicted only by the exceptional diligence of the House of Commons. Now, at this grievous moment, came

forth a disciple of Oates and Fuller named Young, also a rogue and a criminal, also in gaol, who devised a scheme to win himself riches and consideration by accusing well-known and likely men of murderous conspiracy.[1]

Young was by his own confession an expert forger. He had obtained a specimen of Marlborough's signature by writing to him about the character of a servant. He drew up a document purporting to be a bond of association between certain persons to take the Prince of Orange, dead or alive, and to restore King James. He forged the names of Marlborough, Cornbury, Archbishop Sancroft, and the harmless Bishop of Rochester, Sprat, with some others, as signatories. His confederate, Blackhead, hid this poisonous evidence in a flowerpot in the house of the unwitting Bishop of Rochester. Young then warned the Cabinet of their peril and where the proof could be found. Above all things, he said, they must search the Bishop's flowerpots. Under the threat of invasion, on the eve of fateful battle with the fleet commanded by a suspected admiral, a panic-fierce mood ruled at the council-board. Marlborough and one or two leading Jacobites were arrested out of hand and sent to the Tower. Three members of the Council, Lords Devonshire, Bradford, and Montagu, kept their heads; they declined to sign the warrant upon the evidence of a single witness of whose credibility the most that could be said was that "he had not yet had his ears cropped." But Marlborough slept the night of May 4 a prisoner of State upon a charge of high treason.

Stringent search was now made of the Bishop's palace, and almost every flowerpot was examined. But there was one which, because it stood near the servants' quarters, was overlooked. In this lay the paper which, if discovered at that moment, might have cost not only the Bishop but our hero his life. The officers of the Crown returned to Whitehall with the Bishop in custody, but no evidence. Young then procured from his prison cell the recovery of the document, and sent it with another legend to the Council.

But meanwhile a fortnight had passed and great events had happened. On May 19/29 the English and Dutch fleets, which had effected their junction before the French were ready, encountered Tourville with the main French naval power off Cape La Hogue. The forces were impressive in their number, but Russell's armada, which carried forty thousand men and seven thousand guns, was

[1] *Cf.* "A Relation of the Late Wicked Contrivance of Stephen Blackhead and Robert Young," by the Bishop of Rochester, in *Harleian Miscellany*, x, i.

the stronger by ninety-nine ships to forty-four. Both sides fought hard, and Tourville was beaten. His flagship, *Le Soleil Royal*, named in honour of Louis XIV, was first battered and then burned to the water's edge. The French fleet was scattered and driven into its ports. But this was not the end. Russell and his admirals, three of the most daring of whom were counted on the Jacobite lists as pledged and faithful adherents of King James, followed the beaten navy into its harbours. For five successive days the fighting continued. The fugitive warships were cut out under the shore batteries by flotillas of hardy English row-boats; the store-ships and many of the transports were burned; and the whole apparatus of invasion was destroyed under the very eyes of the King it was to have borne to his native shore.

The battle of Cape La Hogue, with its consequential actions, effaced the memories of Beachy Head. More than that, it broke decisively for the whole of the wars of William and Anne all French pretensions to supremacy at sea. It was the Trafalgar of the seventeenth century. We invite the reader to judge whether fact is not stronger than fiction; whether substance is not more solid than shadow. Because Russell had flirted with the Jacobite agents; because these agents had vapourized to the Court at Saint-Germains; because James had wanted to believe all his agents told him, and made the most of it to Louis; and because the Jacobite writers have invented and written whatever they pleased about him, Russell stands convicted before history as a "villain" and a "traitor." This shattering victory and noble feat of arms counts for nothing in his favour. Macpherson, Dalrymple, Macaulay, and the docile flock of scrap-nibblers who have browsed upon their pastures, have managed hitherto to twist history and reality to his condemnation. We submit to modern judgment two propositions about him: that he was wrong and foolish to have trafficked with the Jacobite agents, but that he was quite right to beat the French and ruin King James's cause, which was on the whole rather more important.

The fears of the Council and the excitement of the public were calmed by the victory. Lords Huntingdon and Scarsdale, who had been arrested on other grounds at the same time as Marlborough, were set at liberty. William, who had been perturbed by the irregularity of these arrests, wrote to the Council expressing his doubts about such serious steps.[1] Nevertheless, so strong were the feelings of the Queen that Marlborough was still kept a close prisoner in

[1] *Correspondence of William III and Portland*, i, 171, "une chose bien délicate."

the Tower. Sarah came from Brentford to London in order to be near him, to help in his defence, and to agitate for his release. No one was allowed to visit him except upon the authority of the Secretary of State, and we have consequently a series of orders signed by Nottingham giving Sarah and some others access to him. Among the few who faced the displeasure of the Queen, Lord Bradford was conspicuous. As is usual with people in such a position, the Marlboroughs found few friends. Other nearer trouble fell upon them. On May 22 their younger son Charles died.

Anne's letters are touching in their fidelity and tender solicitude.

> I hear Lord Marlborough is sent to the Tower; and though I am certain they have nothing against him, and expected by your letter it would be so, yet I was struck when I was told it; for methinks it is a dismal thing to have one's friends sent to that place. I have a thousand melancholy thoughts, and cannot help fearing they should hinder you from coming to me; though how they can do that without making you a prisoner I cannot imagine.
>
> I am just told by pretty good hands, that as soon as the wind turns westerly,[1] there will be a guard set upon the Prince and me. If you hear there is any such thing designed, and that 'tis easy to you, pray let me see you before the wind changes; for afterwards one does not know whether they will let one have opportunities of speaking to one another. But let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the satisfaction of seeing dear Mrs Freeman; and I swear I would live on bread and water, between four walls, with her, without repining; for as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness, in this world or the next, if ever she proves false to you.[2]

And:

> I give dear Mrs Freeman a thousand thanks for her kind letter, which gives me an account of her concerns, and that is what I desire to know more than any other news. I shall reckon the days and hours, and think the time very long till the term is out, for both your sake and my Lord Marlborough's, that he may be at liberty and your mind at ease. You do not say anything of your health which makes me hope you are well, at least not worse than when you were here.

And again, with asperity:

> I am sorry with all my heart dear Mrs Freeman meets with so many delays; but it is a comfort they cannot keep Lord Marlborough in the Tower longer than the end of the [legal] term; and I hope, when Parlia-

[1] This wind liberated the French fleets from Brest.

[2] *Conduct*, pp. 42 *seq.*

ment sits, care will be taken that people may not to be clapped up for nothing, or else there will be no living in quiet for anybody but insolent Dutch and sneaking mercenary Englishmen.

In a further letter:

. . . And there is no misery I cannot readily resolve to suffer, rather than the thought of parting from you. And I do swear I would rather be torn to pieces than alter this my resolution.

And again:

My dear Mrs Freeman was in so dismal a way when she went from hence, that I cannot forbear asking how she does, and if she has yet any hopes of Lord Marlborough's being soon at liberty. For God's sake have a care of your dear self, and give as little way to melancholy thoughts as you can. . . . I fancy asses' milk would do you good, and that is what you might take morning or afternoon, as it is most convenient. . . . I will not fail of being with my dear Mrs Freeman about five or six o'clock unless you are to go to the Tower.

With a view no doubt to helping her friends, Anne also wrote the Queen a respectful letter:

SYON
May 20

I have now, God be thanked, recovered my strength well enough to go abroad. And though my duty and inclination would both lead me to wait upon your Majesty as soon as I am able to do it, yet I have of late had the misfortune of being so much under your Majesty's displeasure as to apprehend there may be hard constructions made upon anything I either do or not do with the most respectful intentions. And I am now in doubt whether the same arguments, that have prevailed with your Majesty to forbid people from showing their usual respects to me, may not be carried so much farther as not to permit me to pay my duty to you. That, I acknowledge, would be a great increase of affliction to me, and nothing but your Majesty's own command shall ever willingly make me submit to it. For whatever reason I may think in my own mind I have to complain of being hardly used, yet I will strive to hide it as much as possible. And though I will not pretend to live at the Cockpit, unless you would be so kind as to make it easy to me, yet wherever I am, I will endeavour always to give the constant marks of duty and respect, which I have in my heart for your Majesty, as becomes Your Majesty's very affectionate sister and servant,

ANNE

The answer was chilling:

I have received yours by the Bishop of Worcester and have very

little to say to it, since you cannot but know that as I never used compliments, so now they will not serve.

'Tis none of my fault we live at this distance, and I have endeavoured to show my willingness to do otherwise. And I will do no more. Don't give yourself any unnecessary trouble, for be assured it is not words can make us live together as we ought. You know what I required of you. And I now tell you, if you doubted it before, that I cannot change my mind but expect to be complied with, or you must not wonder if I doubt of your kindness. You can give me no other marks that will satisfy me. Nor can I put any other construction upon your actions than what all the world must do that sees them. These things don't hinder me being very glad to hear you are so well and wishing you may continue so, and that you may yet, while 'tis in your power, oblige me to be your affectionate sister,

MARIE R.

There is little doubt that the King and Queen, heating each other in their anger, explored the question of curtailing Anne's Parliamentary grant. They encountered a steady resistance from Godolphin at the Treasury. Moreover, the House of Commons would have resented any such proposal. Rumours, however, of the project reached Sarah through a sure channel. She continued to suggest that she should relieve the tension by departing—at any rate, for a time. The Princess's attitude was magnificent:

I really long to know how my dear Mrs Freeman got home; and now I have this opportunity of writing, she must give me leave to tell her, if she should ever be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs Morley, she will rob her of all the joy and quiet of her life; for if that day should come, I could never enjoy a happy minute, and I swear to you I would shut myself up and never see a creature. You may easily see all this would have come upon me, if you had not been. If you do but remember what the Q. said to me the night before your Lord was turned out of all; then she begun to pick quarrels; and if they should take off twenty or thirty thousand pound, have I not lived upon as little before? When I was first married we had but twenty (it is true indeed the King [Charles] was so kind to pay my debts), and if it should come to that again, what retrenchment is there in my family I would not willingly make and be glad of that pretence to do it? Never fancy, dear Mrs Freeman, if what you fear should happen, that you are the occasion; . . . therefore rest satisfied you are no ways the cause; and let me beg once more, for God's sake, that you would never mention parting more, no nor so much as think of it; and if you should ever leave me, be assured it would break your faithful Mrs Morley's heart.

Sarah having requested that Prince George should know the position, Anne wrote:

In obedience to dear Mrs Freeman I have told the Prince all she desired me, and he is so far from being of another opinion, if there had been occasion he would have strengthened me in my resolutions, and we both beg you would never mention so cruel a thing any more. Can you think either of us so wretched that for the sake of twenty thousand pound, and to be tormented from morning to night with flattering knaves and fools, we should forsake those we have such obligations to, and that we are so certain we are the occasion of all their misfortunes? . . . And which is much more, how would my conscience reproach me for having sacrificed my honour, reputation and all the substantial comforts of this life for transitory interest, which, even to those who make it their idol, can never afford any real satisfaction, much less to a virtuous mind? No, my dear Mrs Freeman, never believe your faithful Mrs Morley will ever submit. She can wait with patience for a sunshine day, and if she does not live to see it, yet she hopes England will flourish again.

Meanwhile Marlborough had recourse to the Council. To Danby, the Lord President, he wrote:[1]

Having been informed that it is now publicly discoursed in Westminster Hall to-day that a letter under my hand was to be produced to the grand jury, to induce them to find a bail against me, I beg leave to assure your Lordship, upon my honour and credit, that if any such letter be pretended, it must and will, upon examination, appear so plainly to have been forged, that as it can be of no credit or advantage to the Government, so I doubt not but your Lordship's justice will be ready to protect me from so injurious a proceeding, who am, etc.

And to Devonshire, the Lord High Steward:

I am so confident of my innocence, and so convinced, if there be any such letter, that it must appear to be forged, and made use of only to keep me in prison, that I cannot doubt but your Lordship will be so kind as to let me find your protection against such a proceeding, which will be a reproach to the Government as well as an injury to

Yours, etc.

He also used his rights under the law, invoked the Habeas Corpus Act, and demanded admission to bail. To Halifax he wrote:

My Counsel being to move the Court of King's Bench for my Habeas Corpus the beginning of next term, and [I] being very certain of my

[1] These three letters are in Wolseley, ii, 273–274, 283.

own innocence, and that no instance can be shown why I should not be bailed, I desire the favour of your Lordship to be there and be one of my sureties for my appearance, not knowing yet how many they may require to be found for me; I shall be unwilling to give your Lordship this trouble without a necessity, and in that case I shall always own it as the greatest obligation to your Lordship's most obedient.

MARLBOROUGH

On June 11 Young and his accomplice, Blackhead, were brought before the Privy Council. The Bishop has left us the following clear and well-documented account. It is an intimate and invaluable picture of the methods of those days. We see the care and zeal in which the Cabinet Ministers did their duty, Nottingham's long and untiring examination of the witnesses, the search for the truth, the ceremonious treatment of the accused prelate. The event was dramatic. Confronted with Bishop Sprat and under the stern eyes of the Council, Blackhead, who had already weakened, broke down completely, and confessed his crime. We have the following dialogue:

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Blackhead, last time you confessed you brought the Bishop of Rochester a letter from Robert Young, under the false name of Dr Hookes.

BLACKHEAD: Yes, I did.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Can you know that letter when you see it?

BLACKHEAD: I cannot tell, I doubt I cannot know it.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Here it is (*and it was given into his hand*); is that the same letter you delivered the Bishop?

BLACKHEAD: I am not sure it is.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Consider it well; look on the superscription, you cannot but remember that. You began to be somewhat ingenuous last Friday; if you relapse it will fare the worse with you.

BLACKHEAD: Yes, this may be the letter; this is the very same letter.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: But what made you, when you were at Bromley the second time, so earnestly desire of the Bishop's butler, and his other servants, that you might see the rooms in the house, especially his study?

BLACKHEAD: No, I do not remember that I desired to see the study. The house I might out of curiosity.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: But here are some of the Bishop's servants without, who are ready to swear, that you pressed very often to get a sight of his study. . . .

BLACKHEAD: I cannot deny that I did desire to see the Bishop's study. . . .

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What reason had you to be so importunate to see that or any of the other rooms? Had you any paper about you that you designed to drop or leave in any part of the Bishop's house?

Here Blackhead stopped as very loth to out with it; till divers of the lords urged him to tell the truth. At last he went on, though with much hesitancy.

BLACKHEAD: Yes, I must confess I had a paper in my pocket which I designed to put somewhere in the house.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What did you with it?

BLACKHEAD: I did leave it in the parlour next the kitchen.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: In what part of the parlour?

BLACKHEAD: In the flowerpot in the chimney.

At this the Bishop broke in. "Good Lord bless me!" he cried. "I seriously protest. I never heard that any paper was found there by my servants. To be sure they would have brought it me." And he offered to send his servants in quest.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Nay, my lord, there is no need of that testimony now. For this fellow has said already more than they know. He has confessed not only that he desired to see your house, and particularly your study, but that he did leave a paper somewhere in it; and that he did leave one in your parlour and in the flowerpot of the chimney. . . . Blackhead, what paper was it you left in the Bishop's chimney?

BLACKHEAD: It was the association.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Was it this paper here (*showing the association that lay upon the table*)?

BLACKHEAD: Yes, it was.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: How came you by it? and who advised you to lodge it there?

BLACKHEAD: I had it from Mr Young and he advised me to leave it in the Bishop's house, as I did.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Did Young direct you to put it in the flowerpot in the parlour?

BLACKHEAD: Yes he did, and I put it there accordingly. . . .

The forged document was now produced and handed round. As we have to deal in Marlborough's life with other charges equally elaborately presented, we give it here as Sprat recollected it.

That we, whose names were subscribed, should solemnly promise, in the presence of God, to contribute our utmost assistance towards King James's recovery of his kingdoms; that to this end, we would have ready to meet him, at his landing, thirty thousand men well armed; that we would seize upon the person of the Princess of Orange, dead or alive; and take care, that some strong garrison should

be forthwith delivered into his hands; and furnish him with a considerable sum of money, for the support of his army.

March 20, 1691

MARLBOROUGH SALISBURY W. CANT.
THO. ROFFEN.[1]
CORNBURY
BASIL FIREBRACE JOHN WILCOXE

The Bishop was startled at the perfection of the forgery. "I am very much amazed," he said, "to see my hand so well counterfeited; all the difference is they have done me the favour to write it finer than I can: otherwise I acknowledge it is so like that I verily believe I myself, had I seen it in another place, should have been apt to doubt whether it were of my writing or no. I am confident it might, upon the first blush, deceive the best friends I have."

Here Godolphin intervened, and his friendly purpose is easily discernible. "My Lords," he said, "I am very well acquainted with Archbishop Sancroft's hand, and here it is almost exactly counterfeited." He added that the Earl of Marlborough's hand had been so well feigned in a letter that had been written by Young himself that it was very difficult for his most intimate friends to observe any distinction.

Young was now brought before the Council.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM (*taking up the association and showing it to Young*): Did you not give this paper to Blackhead and order him to put it in a chimney in the Bishop of Rochester's house, and into a flowerpot, if there were any?

YOUNG: No, I never desired him to carry it thither, or to put it into a flowerpot.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What say you, Blackhead?

BLACKHEAD: Mr Young did give me that paper, and directed me to leave it in the Bishop's house; and if I could, to put it in a flowerpot in some room; which I did, in the parlour.

YOUNG: There is no such matter. I absolutely deny it.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM, LORD SYDNEY, AND OTHERS OF THE COUNCILLORS: Why, then, did you give us such express directions to send and search the flowerpots among other places in the Bishop's house?

YOUNG: I said nothing of flowerpots. I bid you take care that the Bishop's person should be exactly searched; because when he went abroad he carried the association about him; when he was at home, he put it in some private place, for fear of surprise. Perhaps I might say, in the chimney.

[1] This is Sprat's signature, as Bishop of Rochester.

THE COUNCILLORS: Nay, we all well remember, you particularly mentioned the flowerpots.

YOUNG: This is a combination between the Bishop of Rochester and Blackhead to baffle the whole discovery of the plot.

EARL OF DANBY: Young, thou art the strangest creature that ever I heard of. Dost thou think we could imagine that the Bishop of Rochester would combine with this thy confederate to have an association written with his own hand to it and then laid it in his own house in a flowerpot there? which, if it had been found must have endangered his life; and we see it was the most remarkable good fortune to him that almost ever happened to any man, that it was not found there.

During this whole examination, says the Bishop, though Young's forgery was so evidently proved by the confession of his own companion and instrument, yet "he behaved himself with a daring, unconcerned confidence, with a bold and erect countenance, though it had naturally very much of a villain in it." Thus was the whole of this pack of lies blown to pieces, and the Bishop, overflowing with gratitude to God and to the Council, returned to his diocese.

There was now no case of any kind against Marlborough. Not even one of the two witnesses necessary to sustain a charge of treason was available; and the document which incriminated him was a proved and exposed forgery. On June 15, after an imprisonment of six weeks, he succeeded in bringing his case before the Court of the King's Bench on a writ of Habeas Corpus. The Government demanded sureties and bail for £6000. Halifax did not fail him, neither did Shrewsbury. Both these lords, with two other persons, became his sureties. Their action was resented by the Queen. These two famous builders of our constitutional history were forthwith struck off the Privy Council. Marlborough's name was found still, apparently by oversight, upon the roll. The oversight was repaired.

Marlborough was now free, and the Cockpit group reunited at Berkeley House in a companionship of wrath and misfortune. The ordeal had been severe, and the escape narrow. The forgeries of Young had been so perfect that Marlborough admitted himself when shown the document that he could have hardly believed that it was not his own autograph. Such a plot, had it not miscarried, might well have sent him during the invasion panic to the scaffold. Moreover, he might expect that at any moment some one or other of the Jacobite agents with whom he had consorted and through whom he had communicated with Saint-Germains might come forward with confirmatory revelations. However, his nerves were steel, and

cast the English away at Steinkirk. Had William treated him a little better, had he placed him in his old command, Marlborough would have held Solms' authority in the battle. Could he have altered the stroke of the field, could he within the limits of his sphere have imposed a harmony upon the whole intense event? Might he not have been involved in the insoluble riddles of half-policies and half-controls, and been found unable to free himself from the stifling cloak of circumstance? Might he not have flashed away in the accidents of battle and died with Mackay or instead of him? But of this last no one can complain; it is in the soldier's contract. Or might he have gained for William the one thing that the head of the Grand Alliance lacked, and added laurels of victory to those brows upon which some said he had already set the crown of England?

He had sunk now to the minor and unpleasant position of being a critic of mishandled affairs with whose main intention he agreed. This condition was to rule him for a long time, as our short lives go. The Court guerrilla against Anne continued, and she was subjected to many petty impertinences and something very like what we should now call a society boycott. Marlborough presented his general case to Parliament when it met in November. He found support which in modern times might be decisive. The House of Lords ignored the Royal Speech and proceeded to examine the causes why certain of their members had been unlawfully imprisoned. It was argued that once the charges were dropped the retention of bail and the refusal to discharge recognizances were infringements of privilege. Acrimonious debates ensued. The Constable of the Tower, the Treasury Solicitor, even the judges of the High Court, were summoned. William found himself in the presence of one of those tensely wrought, sternly measured constitutional movements towards which he had been taught in the days of Charles II that English kings should not be unbending. He used the royal prerogative to discharge Marlborough from his recognizances. This grievance removed, both Houses turned to the war.

The most savage debates took place upon the conduct of Count Solms. The hatred felt against him is indescribable. His airs, his prejudice, his incompetence, his brutal levity in the crisis of battle, were all arraigned. He had sent, it was asserted, the English to a butchery, had left them in the lurch, and had even mocked at their sacrifice. "Now we shall see," he had exclaimed when Mackay was almost cut off, "how the bulldogs will come off!" The British Army nourishes a generous tradition, and all is forgiven to a soldier who

dies bravely in the field. Yet when, a year later, in the carnage of Landen, Count Solms fell mortally wounded, English officers and English camps accused him of want of fortitude in the agonies of death. Bitter reproaches arising from undoubted wrongs!

The Lords carried an address praying that no English general should be subordinated to a Dutchman, whatever his rank. In the Commons the Court, or, as we should now say, Ministerial, orators inculcated precepts of humility. Seymour, whose famous independence had at this time been soothed by a place at council, descanted at large upon the inferiority of British generals. Unhappily we had no generals. We might have good captains and majors or even colonels, but no officers fit by their experience or qualities to rank with the high professionals of the Continent. Other speakers chanted this dirge of national self-contempt. The Commons were not convinced. One Member had the temerity to declare that there were ten English officers who would be marshals of France if they were Frenchmen. This was certainly an exaggeration. In the end the Commons pressed less strongly upon the King than the Lords. The conspiracy of Grandval, a Jacobite enthusiast set on by Saint-Germains to murder the King, had rallied strong English sympathies in his behalf; and the power of the Crown proved overwhelming. If William's government could bear the odium of Solms at Steinkirk, it could bear anything. The King returned brief answers to the addresses, and supplies were voted for another mismanaged and disastrous year of war.

In July 1693 was fought the great battle of Landen, unmatched in its slaughter except by Malplaquet and Borodino for two hundred years. The French were in greatly superior strength, having 96 battalions and 210 squadrons to William's 65 battalions and 150 squadrons. Nevertheless the King determined to withstand their attack, and constructed almost overnight a system of strong entrenchments and palisades in the enclosed country along the Landen stream, within the windings of the Geet. The battle resolved itself into an intense struggle for the village of Neerwinden, thrice captured, twice retaken. After an heroic resistance the allies were driven from their position by the French with a loss of nearly twenty thousand men, the attackers losing less than half this total. Nevertheless William rallied the remnants of his army, gathered reinforcements, and, since Luxembourg neglected to pursue his victory, was able surprisingly to maintain himself in the field.

There was an episode in the battle which is of interest to this

account. The Duke of Berwick was now a General of rising distinction in the French Army. Six French brigades marched abreast to the first assault of Neerwinden. Berwick, who commanded the two centre brigades, carried the village and drove the enemy to its farther end. But the heavy fire in the open ground on either side of the village led the four brigades on the right and left to crowd into it, and the whole force, taken at this disadvantage, was counter-attacked on both flanks by the allies and driven out, leaving Berwick and the survivors of his command to their fate. "I found myself at last," writes Berwick,[1] "completely cut off. Seeing this, I resolved to escape, if possible, by the plain, and having taken out my white cockade, passed for an officer of the enemy." This he was well qualified to do, for his uniform was not dissimilar, and he was an Englishman.

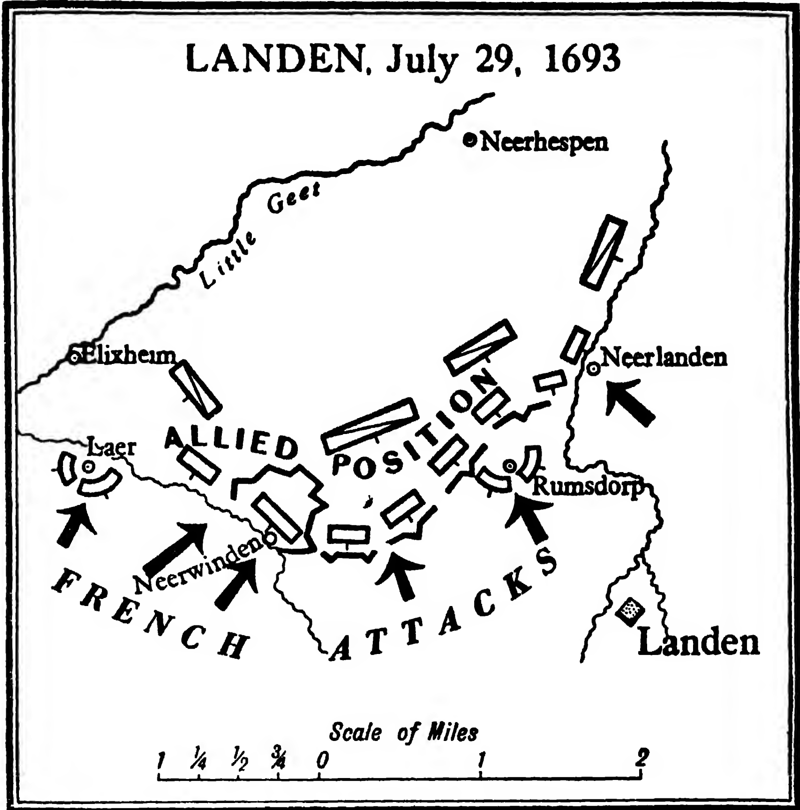
> Unfortunately, Brigadier Churchill,[2] brother to Lord Churchill, now Duke of Marlborough, and my uncle, came up, and recollecting [recognizing] the only Aid-de-camp I had with me, suspected immediately that I might be there, and advancing to me, made me his prisoner. After mutual salutations he told me, he must conduct me to the Prince of Orange. We galloped a considerable time without meeting with him; at last we found him at a great distance from the place of action, in a bottom, where neither friends nor enemies were to be seen. The Prince made me a very polite compliment, to which I only replied by a low bow: after looking stedfastly at me for an instant, he put on his hat, and I mine; then he ordered me to be carried to Lewe.[3]

Berwick's description of William's posture when he was brought before him is no reproach to the proved courage of the King, who as the battle deepened fought desperately in person to retrieve the day. His subsequent treatment of Berwick seems, however, to show that he was angered at Berwick's repulse of his courteous address. "After the battle," writes Berwick,

> M. de Luxemburg had demanded, agreeable to the terms of the cartel, that I should be sent back at the end of a fortnight; on his side he had released all the General Officers of the enemy, that were prisoners on their parole; but notwithstanding this, they detained me at Antwerp. It happening, however, that the Duke of Ormond could not, on account of his wounds, avail himself of the leave which was granted to the rest; M. de Luxemburg informed the enemy, that he should not part with the Duke, till they had released me. He also summoned Lieutenant-General Scravemore, and the other officers to return to

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 113. [2] George Churchill. [3] *Memoirs*, pp. 113–114.

Namur. This produced the intended effect, and I joined our army at the camp of Nivelle. The Prince of Orange certainly had a design of sending me prisoner to England, where I should have been closely confined in the Tower of London, though that would have been contrary to all the rules of war; for, though he pretended that I was his



subject, and consequently a rebel, yet he had no right to treat me as such, since I was not taken prisoner in a territory that belonged to him. We were in the country of the King of Spain, and I had the honour to serve as Lieutenant-General in the army of the Most Christian King; so that the Prince of Orange could be considered in no other light on that ground than as an auxiliary.[1]

Of all these stirring events, which at so many points touched him intimately, Marlborough continued to be a mere spectator.

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 116.

Chapter Twenty-five

THE CAMARET BAY LETTER

1694

EARLY in 1694 King William and his Council planned a descent on Brest.

> The difficulty of forcing the French to general actions in the open sea, the impossibility of blocking up their fleets for any considerable time at Brest in the stormy sea of the Bay of Biscay, or at Toulon in the swelling sea of the Gulph of Lyons, had satisfied the King, that the only way to conquer the fleets of France was in their own harbours.[1]

It was also a definite part of the allied war policy to keep the northern coast of France in apprehension of attack, and to draw troops and munitions thither from the main front in Flanders.

The secret was ill-kept or perhaps deliberately bruited about, and became the common talk of London.[2] The information reached Paris. Already at the beginning of April King Louis had received news "from several sources that an attack on Brest is intended by 7000 British troops and the combined navies of Britain and Holland."[3] This information, howsoever obtained, was accurate even to the number of the troops. On April 4/14 he moved two regiments of horse and six battalions of coastguards to the place, and instructed Vauban, then inspecting the fortresses of Normandy, to look to the defences. Vauban executed his orders on an elaborate scale but in a leisurely manner, and the reinforcements came in gradually. Nevertheless by the end of May Brest was in the highest condition of preparedness, and ten or twelve thousand additional regular troops were on the spot in pursuance of orders issued nearly two months before. These steps were taken by the French upon the reports of their own intelligence service and agents; and that they had been taken was known on both sides of the Channel. The Jacobites at

[1] Dalrymple, iii, Part III, 59.

[2] See Paget's references to Boyer, Ralph, Kennet, Oldmixon, etc., in *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 27. Luttrell, *Relation*, iii, 328. *Per contra*, Macaulay, iv, 510, quoting L'Hermitage.

[3] Louis XIV to Vauban, *cit.* Wolseley, ii, 314.

Saint-Germains knew it;[1] William himself and his Council knew it.[2] The secrets of both attack and defence had leaked out; the counter-measures had been or were being taken; and the English Government were aware of both facts. Such was the position in the last week in April.

For what followed we must refer to the Nairne Papers, the origin of which an earlier chapter has described. These can all now be seen in the Carte Collection in the Bodleian. Those containing the charges against the Revolution leaders are eight in number.

(1) The James Memorial.
(2) The Melfort Instructions.
(3) The Landen Memorial.
(4) The Berkeley Report.
(5) The Sunderland Memorial.
(6) The Arran Letter.
(7) The Floyd Report.
(8) The Camaret Bay Letter.[3]

With these last two, which alone concern Marlborough, we must now deal.

Saint-Germains were naturally anxious to maintain credit with their French hosts for knowledge of England and all that passed there. Floyd, Groom of the Bedchamber to James II, had been again in London since March. He sought interviews with the leading personages to whom he had access. According to his account, which is the seventh of the eight Nairne Papers, he was received in the third week of April 1694 by Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Russell, and Marlborough with all proper expressions of loyalty to the exiled sovereign. Marlborough and Shrewsbury, he states, told him nothing. Russell, the Admiral, was affable, voluble, and vague. "What would *you* do [to help James]," he asked Floyd, who was an ex-naval officer, "if you were in my place?" Floyd replied that obviously in the case of an invasion he could "avoid the French fleet and allow it to pass." The Admiral said he would not do that,

[1] Floyd Report, Macpherson, i, 480.

[2] King William's letter of June 18 to Shrewsbury, Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 457.

[3] A detailed and searching analysis of each of these documents was published in *The English Historical Review* of April 1897 by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Arthur Parnell, R.E. He arrived at the conclusion that they were not only thoroughly untrustworthy, but in most cases, especially the Camaret Bay Letter, actual fabrications. His argument was countered in the same review, in July 1920, by Professor G. Davis. The two articles read together give a comprehensive view of the controversy.

on the same authority, endorsed this. Russell, he said, "in his opinion had said all that could be expected of him."

Even more remarkable is the fact that Godolphin repeated back almost textually to Floyd the statements which Floyd had volunteered to Russell. These resemblances cannot be set down to coincidence. A simpler explanation suggests itself. It is reasonable to suppose that before Godolphin received Floyd, Russell had told him what Floyd knew, and Godolphin knew exactly how far he could go without injuring the interests of the State. It is evident that the Ministers consulted upon the matter with each other. It is even possible that they imparted a portion of their conversations to King William.

Certainly William's attitude after the fiasco and tragedy of Brest was, as will be seen, compatible with this view. After all, events still lay within the control of the English executive. They knew that their plan was known. They knew it before Floyd had visited Russell. If one port was prepared, others might be neglected. Alarm and even advertisement were definite elements in all this coastal threat. Alternatively their very candour if reported in France might disarm French suspicion at this particular point. At any moment William could stop the fleet sailing or send it to a different destination.[1] These men were not simpletons. On the contrary, they were statesmen who with small resources, in the teeth of unusual difficulties, solved some of the most perplexing problems of peace and war, and carried their country successfully through a period of enormous peril. The final decision to send the fleet was clearly taken with full knowledge that the French had heard that it was going to Brest, and might be ready for it there.

[1] The following imaginary conversation is probably more true to life and reality than the monstrous assumptions which historians have adopted:

GODOLPHIN. Floyd has been to see us again, sire.

KING WILLIAM. Did you get anything out of him?

GODOLPHIN. They know all about our Brest plan. He told the whole story to the Admiral.

KING WILLIAM. I don't mind that so much if it draws troops from Flanders. But how did you deal with him?

GODOLPHIN. We left him where he was. In fact, I served him back exactly what he had told Russell.

KING WILLIAM. It may deceive them: but we shall have to be careful, when the time comes, to go somewhere else if we find them ready at Brest. There is no need to make up our minds yet. The fleet is still fitting out. The dockyards are full of spies, but it rests with us where it shall go. By the way, my lord, how does exile suit the charming Queen?

GODOLPHIN (*bowing*). Sire, I am sending her some sweetmeats.

The eighth of the Nairne Papers is the foundation for the charge against Marlborough. It purports to be the translation into French of a letter from Major-General Sackville forwarding a letter from Marlborough to King James. We print it in facsimile.[1] The English retranslation is as follows:

> *3rd May*, 1694. I have just received the enclosed letter for the King. It is from Lord Churchill; but no person but the Queen and you must know from whom it comes. Therefore, for the love of God, let it be kept a close secret, even from Lord Middleton. I send it by an express, judging it to be of the utmost consequence for the service of the King, my master; and consequently for the service of His Most Christian Majesty. You see by the contents of this letter that I am not deceived in the judgment I formed of Admiral Russell; for that man has not acted with good faith, and I fear he never will act otherwise.

Translation of Lord Churchill's letter of the same date to the King of England

> It is only to-day that I have just learned the news I now write to you; which is, that the bomb-ketches and the twelve regiments encamped at Portsmouth, with the two regiments of marines, all commanded by Talmash,[2] are destined for burning the port of Brest, and destroying all the men-of-war that are there. This will be a great advantage to England. But no consideration can prevent, or ever shall prevent me from informing you of all that I believe can be for your service. Therefore you may make your own use of this intelligence, which you may rely upon as exactly true. But I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know it but the Queen and the bearer of this letter. Russell will set sail to-morrow with forty ships, the rest being not yet paid; but it is said that in ten days the rest of the fleet will follow; and at the same time, the land forces. I attempted to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell. But he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions. I shall be very well pleased to learn that this letter has come safely to your hands.

Here is the damning piece. It is upon this document that the pinnacle of Macaulay's libels upon Marlborough has been erected. Macaulay assumes its authenticity with unquestioning glee, and proceeds to use it in the most sensational and malicious manner. He suppresses all the other channels by which information had reached the French King, though these were, of course, known to him. He suppresses all the previous preparations made by the French. By

[1] Facing p. 382.

[2] The Tollemache already mentioned.

Marlborough, and Marlborough alone, was the secret betrayed. Upon his information, and upon that alone, were the French precautions begun. Upon his head alone descends the guilt and infamy of the disaster which followed. Besides his habitual treason to King William and to his country, the arch-villain had in this case a special private incentive to treachery.

> Yet never had Marlborough been less a Jacobite than at the moment when he rendered this wicked and shameful service to the Jacobite cause. It may be confidently affirmed that to serve the banished family was not his object, and that to ingratiate himself with the banished family was only his secondary object. His primary object was to force himself into the service of the existing Government, and to gain possession of those important and lucrative places from which he had been dismissed more than two years before. He knew that the country and Parliament would not patiently bear to see the English army commanded by foreign generals. Two Englishmen only had shown themselves fit for high military posts, himself and Talmash. If Talmash were defeated and disgraced, William would scarcely have a choice. In fact, as soon as it was known that the expedition had failed, and that Talmash was no more, the general cry was that the King ought to receive into his favour the accomplished captain who had done such good service at Walcourt, at Cork, and at Kinsale.[1]

Marlborough's defenders and apologists have been concerned to expose the many untruths in Macaulay's account and to throw the blame on others. "Modern criticism," it has been said,[2] "has passed by the meanness of Godolphin to assail the glory of Marlborough." The charge that Marlborough's main incentive was to compass the ruin or the death of Tollemache and thus make himself indispensable assumes that Marlborough could know occultly beforehand that Tollemache would attack in spite of finding the place prepared, that he would land himself at the head of his troops, and that he would fail or be killed or mortally wounded. Paget, Wolseley, and Colonel Lloyd[3] have occupied themselves in proving that Marlborough's letter was not the means by which the French learned the news; that their preparations had begun at least a month before; that Marlborough knew from Godolphin that the French were aware of the plan; that he only sought to ingratiate himself with James II by revealing what was already known; and that he delayed sending the news until he was sure it would arrive too late to influence events.

[1] *History*, iv, 514. [2] *Cambridge Modern History*, v, 461.
[3] "Marlborough and the Brest Expedition," in *The English Historical Review*, 1894.

This view has been generally accepted by later writers and commentators.[1]

But this defence, though valid against Macaulay's libels and embroideries, involves the admission of Marlborough's shame in intention, if not in act. His alleged letter contains precise details. Although the fleet sailed the next day but one, it might have been delayed, and was in fact seriously delayed, and more than a month elapsed before the attack was made. Although the letter did not influence events, it might have done so. If it were ever written it must leave upon the character of John Churchill an ineffaceable and fatal stain. Standards of conduct and morals—public or private—change with the ages, and men are largely the creatures of their environment. Custom and convention play their parts. Desperate need issues its imperious commands. Dark deeds sow their crop of dragon's teeth. Many allowances should be made where a different "climate of opinion" prevails. But in every age the loyalty of a general to his comrades in the army, to the troops he has led and may lead again, is an inflexible obligation. Soldierly honour was as well understood under Queen Anne as under Queen Victoria. Marlborough was a soldier born and bred. He had served from a youth in rank after rank at home and abroad, in peace and war. He was a trained professional, instinct with the spirit of camps and regiments. His courage and humanity have never been assailed. Even his bitterest detractors acclaim them. His care for the lives of his troops was indefatigable even to his last campaign. At sixty-two—Duke, Prince, Generalissimo, and millionaire—he would tramp the trenches and lines and go in person to any dangerous point of attack in order to make sure with his own eyes that men were not thrown away, or set tasks impossible to perform. He was ever proud to share their perils and avaricious of their love and trust.

Is it possible that a single human being could combine the finest military virtues, the strictest sense of military duty, with the vilest military crimes? Could he—and for a purpose almost paltry and gains uncertain and mediocre—foully betray his comrades by hundreds to their death? Such strange contrarieties may writhe together in the brain of a maniac or a monster. They are not easily to be reconciled in a single sane, well-balanced being. Moreover,

[1] A notable exception is Professor Basil Williams, who in his *Stanhope* (1932), apparently oblivious of forty years of accepted opinion and research, inertly or docilely reproduces the crude, exploded slander that "the gallant General Talmash" fell "as victim to Marlborough's treachery in the ill-fated Brest expedition" (p. 15).

the political facts of 1693–94 make it improbable in the last degree that Marlborough would have desired to act against the reigning dynasty in England. All his closest friends were in power or gradually returning to it. In August 1693 he had taken part in a secret conference at Althorp at which Sunderland, Shrewsbury, and other leaders of the future Whig Junto were present. He had already attempted to bring about a reconciliation between the Queen and Princess Anne, and to effect at this very time a formal meeting of the two sisters. Lastly, with Shrewsbury and Godolphin he was a large subscriber to the Bank of England, thus engaging his dearly loved "lucre" in support of the new régime.[1] Military honour, political associations, financial interest—all alike forbade the outrage and folly of which he is accused. Before accepting such unreasonable conclusions, let us examine the letter with attention.

We had always supposed, from reading both the assailants and the defenders of Marlborough, that the original of this letter existed, and that either the archives of the house of Stuart or the Carte Collection at the Bodleian contained the infamous document, written in Marlborough's characteristic painstaking handwriting. Dalrymple, however, says:

> The originals of the two last letters (Sackville's and Marlborough's) are not in existence in the Scots College at Paris where the other two papers are, but copies were found among the other official papers of Nairne, Under Secretary of State to Lord Melfort, and one of them has an interlineation in Lord Melfort's handwriting. In King James's Memoirs I have seen a memorandum in his own handwriting that Lord Churchill had on the 4th May given him information of the design upon Brest. I was told by Principal Gordon of the Scots College at Paris that during the hostilities between the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Oxford near the end of the Queen's reign, Lord Oxford who had got intelligence of the Duke's letter and pretended at that time to be in the interests of the exiled family, applied for and got an order for the original; and that his making the Duke know that his life was in his hands, was the cause of the Duke's going into a voluntary exile at Brussels in the year 1712; and indeed so extraordinary a step as that exile must have had an extraordinary cause. It is known too from the history of the times that there was a private meeting between the Duke and Lord Oxford at Mr Thomas Harley's house to which the Duke came by the back door, immediately after which he left England. I have also heard from the late Archbishop of York, grandson to the

[1] Feiling, pp. 295–296, 306. According to L'Hermitage (Add. MSS., 17677 O.O., f. 279 *verso*), Marlborough and Shrewsbury subscribed £10,000 each and Godolphin £7,000.

Earl of Oxford, that he had been informed that the Duchess of Marlborough after the death of these two persons, had contrived to get the letter from Lord Oxford's papers and destroyed it.[1]

Thus we see how the very fact that no original of this letter is in existence can be made to blacken the guilt of the man who is accused of writing it. If the proof exists, he is guilty of treason; as it does not exist, he or his wife must be guilty of destroying it. Thus Dalrymple, whose tale had a good run for several generations.

A different though similar story occurs in Shelburne's autobiography printed in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*:[2]

> When Lord Oxford was sent to the Tower, the Duke of Berwick, who had owed him some obligations, sent to know whether he could do anything to serve him, and in the meantime sent him an original letter from the Duke of Marlborough to the Pretender for him to make any use of he thought proper. Lord Oxford asked his counsel, Sergeant Cummins, whether it could be of any: he said "A great deal; I would advise your Lordship to send your son, Lord Harley, with it to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, but as I have known such things sometimes snatched and torn up, I would keep the original and send only an exact copy." Lord Harley waited accordingly on the Duke of Marlborough, saying that he waited on his Grace by his father's directions with it, and nothing more. The Duke read it attentively, and said: "My Lord, this is not my hand." Lord Harley said, "My father has the original": upon which civil bows passed without a word more, but the prosecution in a few weeks after was dropped.

A contradictory variant of this story is found in Seward.[3]

Here we have, therefore, the same tale of some deadly letter by which the Duke of Marlborough, after all his glories, the greatest living figure in the world, was liable to be blackmailed. In the first instance we are told by Dalrymple that the fear of this letter held over him by Lord Oxford induced him to retreat to Brussels in 1712. In the second instance, in 1715, it is Lord Oxford's son who is sent to threaten, as the result of which his father's prosecution is dropped. Obviously if in 1712 Oxford, then Prime Minister, had possessed the damning document the authenticity of which Marlborough had

[1] iii, Part III, 65–66. [2] i, 22.

[3] "During the preparations for the trial of Harley Earl of Oxford, a relation of his went to the Duchess of Marlborough, with a copy of a letter which the Duke had written to the Pretender. She taking the letter from him, and reading it, tore it to pieces. He then shewed her the original. The trial soon after was stopped, on a supposed misunderstanding between the Houses of Lords and Commons." (Seward, *Anecdotes*, p. 268.)

immediately recognized and in dread of which he had quitted the country forthwith, it would not have been necessary for Oxford in 1715, still possessed of the document, to send a copy of it by his son. Marlborough would have been aware in 1715 of the hold which Oxford had established over him in 1712. Therefore we must conclude that this is the same scandalous narrative by two different writers, each agreeing in malice and libel, but completely at variance in time and circumstance.

The Shelburne and Seward versions can be proved false in various essentials with the greatest ease. We are told:

> Lord Oxford came to a full resolution to petition the House of Lords in March [1716] to be tried, in which he principally advised with Lord Trevor. As soon as this was known the Duke of Marlborough talked of nothing but a Bill of Attainder or a Bill of Banishment.[1]

> In May 1716 after the Whigs had been in some measure satiated with the blood of the Preston prisoners, the Duke of Marlborough began to solicit and to forward as much as in him lay a Bill of Attainder against the Earl of Oxford. Mr Walpole and Lord Townsend assumed to themselves the merit of opposing it and by that stopping it. The Duke was in a great rage and anger upon their not complying with him, and went out of town to St Albans, whereupon he was struck with that illness which he never recovered, it was a great while before he recovered his speech, his senses he never fully recovered.[2]

This is a good example of the fertility of the calumnies against Marlborough. The reader may choose between the spectacle of his being blackmailed into tame inactivity by the threatened exposure, and persisting so violently in his quest for vengeance that his passions brought on an apoplectic stroke. Any tale is good enough to smirch his character. But if this latter unpleasant account is accepted, it flatly contradicts the story of the Shelburne memoirs. The two charges are mutually destructive. As a matter of fact, neither version is true. The reasons why the prosecution of Lord Oxford was dropped are undisputed history. All the facts of the quarrel between the two Houses of Parliament which resulted first in a prolonged deadlock and conflict between them and thereafter in the acquittal of Oxford by the Lords are set forth plainly in every standard work upon the period. Marlborough after 1715 was already fast declining in mental and physical strength. Although restored to the office of Captain-General, he was no longer in the inner circle. He had neither the power nor means to influence the intricate and

[1] Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, v, 667–668. [2] Stowe MSS., 825, f. 120.

varying course of the dispute between the two Houses. At that date the publication of such a letter would not have menaced him in property, liberty, or life. Twenty years had passed, and his fidelity to the Protestant cause and to the Revolution of 1688 had been written with the sword upon the battlefields of Europe.

The whole of this story is a tissue of fraud and lies, of gossip and calumny, such as gather around the footsteps of the great, the powerful, and the envied. Few are the public men in any modern state who have reached exceptional eminence without there being passed from foul lips to pricked-up ears some tale of shamefulness. "This one was corrupt"; or "that one was immoral"; or "the other perverted." In the clubs, messes, and pothouses of every country such atrocious stories are the inseparable shadow of worldly success. Historians come along and in default of better material pick up this scandalous chatter, that "so and so heard from Mr Nonsuch that his grandfather had told the Bishop of Q. that his wife once had a letter which if it had not unhappily been mislaid, or destroyed, purloined, or corruptly purchased, would have, etc., etc., etc."

However, it is certain that no such letter in Marlborough's handwriting ever reached Saint-Germains. All that exists or has ever existed is the document shown in facsimile opposite p. 382. It is headed as follows: "Translation [*i.e.*, recasting in French] of a letter *in cipher* from Mr Sackfield [Sackville], Mareshal des Camps of His Britannic Majesty, to the Earl of Milford [Melfort]."

The paper is in the handwriting of Nairne. It has not been folded for transmission. It is the translation into French of the decode of an alleged cipher message in English which had been conveyed from Sackville to France, probably in a tiny roll concealed in hat, boot, vesture, or even perhaps in the wad of a pistol. How then, is it suggested, was this communication, if it ever existed, prepared? It seems unlikely that so profound and crafty a conspirator as Marlborough is depicted to be, a man steeped in treachery, his head at stake, or a master of strategy and manœuvre, as we know he was, would, when easier and safer alternatives were open, write such a letter to Sackville, send it by ordinary messenger, and leave it in his hands. It was the sort of letter any man would have been careful about; quite ordinary criminals would be more circumspect.

So we must suppose that the two men were together in England when the deed, if done at all, was done; that they composed both letters in concert, that Sackville, who had the cipher, encoded them, and that all traces of the original draft were carefully destroyed on

the night of May 3, 1694. Upon this common-sense assumption there would have been no need for Marlborough to leave the destruction of this letter to the belated exertions of his Duchess half a century later. We must therefore conclude that there never was any holograph letter of Marlborough's of this kind in existence; or, at the very least, that there never was a moment when such a document was in the power or possession of any other human being.

If this is settled we have taken a considerable step forward in clarifying this matter. The evidence against Marlborough rests upon a lengthy chain, every link of which was admittedly forged by his Jacobite enemies. Sackville, Melfort, Nairne, Dicconson, all, according to the historians, had his life and honour in their hands at their leisure and discretion. Whatever they chose to write they could leave behind them, and as nothing else has survived, that has become decisive for the historians. But unluckily they had no letter from Marlborough. They had to do all the pen-work themselves. Dalrymple, Macpherson, Macaulay have built their fabric of accusation upon the foundation of this letter; but it does not exist; it has never existed. All that exists is a document in Nairne's handwriting purporting to be the copy of a message in cipher from Sackville to Melfort in which Sackville reports the text of a letter or possibly of a verbal message, which he alleges he received from Marlborough. Such evidence would not hang a dog.

But it is said there is a second witness. It is James himself. Macpherson says, "In King James's Memoirs there is the following memorandum written *upon the receipt* of the letter in his own hand, 'May 4 Lord Churchill informed the King of the design on Brest." (Macpherson even gives the page—521.) Macpherson says he saw this in the Memoirs which Mr Fox was told in 1802 were never shown him. Dalrymple, however, in the passage already quoted offers partial confirmation. "In King James's Memoirs I have seen a memorandum in his own handwriting that Lord Churchill had on 4th May given him information of the design upon Brest."

Now King James's Memoirs stopped in 1660, and Dicconson did not begin the *Life* till several years after King James's death in 1702. There were no memoirs covering the period of William's reign, and there was no *Life* of James at all in existence upon which in 1694 or at any other time James could have written the alleged accusation, or anything else. What, then, did Macpherson and Dalrymple see? No doubt they saw Dicconson's *Life*, written perhaps fifteen years later, into the text of which a note purporting to be by James, and

in an imitation of his handwriting, had been interpolated after his death by some Jacobite scribe for the sake of fortifying the charges against the Duke of Marlborough. What they saw was, in fact, what Macaulay has called "one of the thousand fictions invented at Saint-Germains for the purpose of blackening a character which was black enough without such daubing." They may also have looked at the "3 vols. in 4°" of the Memoirs, fair-copied and bound up by Louis Inesse from Dryden's transcript of the year 1686 of James's original Memoirs, "almost illegible," which had "puzzled Mr Carte," and not have noticed, or been given the opportunity to notice, that these carried the story no further than 1660. However it may be, it is clear that they were deceived, or deceived themselves, into proclaiming an untruth which has helped to mislead the writers of five or six generations, and has served as a whetstone for the weapons of calumny.

After this exposure it is scarcely necessary to pursue the point further. But since it illustrates the nature of all frauds to fall to pieces of themselves, the reader should note the difference in the respective statements of Macpherson and Dalrymple. Macpherson in his eagerness to traduce Marlborough says that James's memorandum was written "upon the receipt of the letter," whereas the more cautious Dalrymple only says that "Churchill had on the 4th May given him information," etc., without specifying when the entry was made. The Camaret Bay Letter could not, of course, have been received by James on May 4. Sackville dated it "the 3rd May." This is certainly the Old Style dating, because Marlborough's alleged letter says, "Russell sails to-morrow," and we know that the fleet did in fact sail on the 5th (Old Style), the day after that to-morrow. Of course, it would have been impossible in those days for any missive sent from London on May 3 by other than State couriers to have reached Saint-Germains before the 7th or 8th, and even by them it could not have been delivered before the 6th. This would assume the couriers on both sides and the ship running in connexion, and favourable weather. The 8th of May (Old Style) is the 18th of May (New Style). James, Nairne, Dicconson, and the rest during their residence at Saint-Germains invariably used the New Style in vogue in France. There could, therefore, be no question of James having made this entry in Dicconson's *Life*, even if it had been written, or on any other document, *upon receipt* of the letter. If James ever made such an entry it must have been upon some other occasion. Of this there is no evidence or suggestion of evidence.

And in any case the entry would be wrong. May 4 was neither the date on which the letter was said to have been written nor that on which it could possibly have been received.

On the basis, therefore (*a*) that no original of the Camaret Bay Letter exists and (*b*) that the charge against Marlborough rests solely upon Sackville decoded by Melfort, transcribed by Nairne, let us address ourselves to the text of the letter itself.

The first point to notice is the interlineation after the third line that the letter must be kept a secret "*even from* Lord Middleton [*meme du Comte de Middleton*]." This is not in Nairne's handwriting, but in that of Melfort. The fact is significant. This was above all others the moment when it was vital for Lord Melfort to prove himself invaluable and indispensable. A schism had arisen in the Jacobite councils. They were divided into "Compounders" and "Non-compounders"; the former being willing to subscribe to the requirements of Protestant and constitutional government in the event of a restoration, the latter holding firmly to the extreme Catholic view. The Protestant Lord Middleton represented and was the head of the Compounders; Melfort of the Non-compounders. For more than a year Melfort's credit with James had been waning. Middleton had arrived at Saint-Germains in the autumn of 1693 as joint Secretary of State with Melfort. His appointment as sole Secretary of State in place of Melfort was now imminent. Melfort was politically *in extremis*. At the beginning of this same month of May, and within three days of the date when he claims to have received the Camaret Bay Letter, he was dismissed from his office and appointed to the much humbler post of Secretary to the Queen. Mary of Modena, always a devout and fanatical Catholic, was since her exile immersed in politics and a centre of Jacobite intrigue. In fact, she seems to have concerned herself with secret service matters more closely than did her husband. Melfort felt his dismissal acutely. His justification of his Ministerial conduct written on May 7/17—this same May—shows his state of mind. He had long lived at the centre of a spider's web of secret service and conspiracy. To be divorced from this was a bitter pang. That he should be supplanted by the head of the Protestant Jacobites was an additional twinge to him and a sorrow to the Queen, who in his distress had offered him shelter.

The gravest reasons of policy had induced James to part with Melfort, to whom he was attached, and to install the Protestant Secretary of State in his stead. These reasons are obvious to us,

vaisseaux de guerre qui y sont. Cecy sera un
r l'Angleterre. Mais aucune consideration ne
ni ne m'empechera jamais de vous informer de
ce pouvoir etre pour votre service. Ainsi vous
l'usage de cet avis, et compter qu'il est tres
s'il faut que je vous conjure pour votre propre
une n'en seache rien que la Reine et celuy qui
stre.
sera demain a la voile avec 40 vaisseaux. Le
encore payé. Mais on dit que dans dix jours
elle suivra et en meme temps les trouppes de terre
sçavoir cecy il y a quelque temps de l'Admiral
il me l'a toujours denié quoique je fois tres
voit ce dessein il y a plus de six semaines.
un mechant augure des intentions de cet homme là
de sçavoir que cette lettre vous soit venue
les mains.
ro.

to-day. No restoration was possible except through the support of the Protestant Jacobites of England. Middleton, a man of high integrity, commanded the respect and confidence of a very large number of Whigs and Anti-Catholic Tories. Had a restoration taken place it was to him that all the Protestants who loathed Dutch William and the leaders of the Revolution, whether in or out of King William's councils, looked as guarantee that the follies which James had committed in his short reign would not be renewed, should he regain the crown. It was with Middleton that the English Ministers had such relations as existed. So Melfort must go, and zeal for Rome, even in the Queen's despite, must yield for a time at least to practical politics. The bitter feelings with which Melfort viewed his rival and supplanter were cordially reciprocated, for on October 3 this same year we find Middleton writing to another Compounder, "I wish [hope] Lord Melfort does not come to spit in our potage, for if the Ministers believe that he will be acquainted with what has been proposed, we need think no more about it."[1]

Why, may we ask, should Marlborough be so anxious to correspond only with Melfort and not with Middleton? In so far as he involved himself with the Jacobites he is always represented by them as a Compounder. Indeed, it was to his advice that James's biographer Dicconson attributes James's Declaration in favour of maintaining the rights of Parliament and the interests of the Church of England. Why, then, should he in this—the only document which pretends to be even a copy of a letter—in this, the most deadly of all documents, stipulate that it should not be shown to Lord Middleton, the head of the Compounders? No answer admissible to the human intellect can be given. On all Jacobite showing Middleton was his link, and Middleton was coming into power. Melfort was not his link, was, in fact, the chief opponent of what is alleged to be his view; and Melfort was going out of power. Why indeed should he have tied himself to Melfort on this occasion only, on this occasion above all others? On the other hand, the reasons why Melfort should pretend he had done so are obvious.

The fact that Melfort tampered with the letter for the purpose of enhancing his own importance at the expense of Middleton stands forth beyond dispute. It is fair to ask, was this the only tampering? Curiously enough, seven years later, as we shall see, Melfort got into trouble for a treacherous trick with another letter. Later, in

[1] Macpherson, i, 497.

1708, Marlborough is said to have been informed by one of Melfort's household of the proposed French operations in Scotland. Saint-Simon, who knew Melfort well, always suspected him of playing fast and loose. Such was the man under whose supervision Nairne wrote the Camaret Bay Letter.

The next mark of fabrication is the cross-heading "Translation of Lord Churchill's letter of the same date *to the King of England*."[1] Obviously Marlborough would not have used this unceremonious style to the King. He would never have addressed the King as "you," or written "you may make your own use of this intelligence," or "I must conjure you for your own interest." Sackville, writing only to a Secretary of State on this very occasion and in the same urgency, observed all the forms and laboriously ciphered out "the service of the King, my master" and "the service of His Most Christian Majesty." Why, then, should Marlborough write to the King as to an equal?

And what sense can there be in Marlborough's reference to "the bearer of this letter"? Only the Queen and "the bearer" are to know. The King is conjured ("for his own interest") to observe this injunction. Who was the bearer? The context forbids that it could be Sackville, for he writes his own separate and introductory letter. Who then—a messenger? But the message was in cipher. Was it, then, Melfort himself? But how could Marlborough, writing in England, know that it would be Melfort who would be "the bearer"; and why should he refer to the Secretary of State by this peculiar term? No rational explanation exists.

If the reader will finally look back to the Sackville-Churchill letters,[2] he will be struck by their strange harmony both in sense and in its contradiction. Says Sackville, "No person *but the Queen* and you must know from whom it comes. Therefore, for the love of God, let it be kept a close secret. . . ." Says Churchill, "But I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know it *but the Queen* and the bearer of this letter." Says Sackville of Admiral Russell, "That man *has not acted with good faith, and I fear he never will act otherwise*." Says Churchill, "I attempted to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell. But he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. *This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions*." And, again, Sackville, inconsistently disregarding the secrecy which he had just enjoined, says, "I send it by an express, judging it to be of the utmost conse-

[1] Author's italics. [2] P. 373.

quence for the service of the King, my master; and consequently *for the service of His Most Christian Majesty.*" Says Churchill, with similar inconsequence, "Therefore *you may make your own use* of this intelligence, which you may rely upon as exactly true." Thus they marched both in step and out of step together.

It is difficult to believe that these two letters were written independently. Whether we adopt the theory that Churchill and Sackville composed them together in London or that Nairne and Melfort concocted them together in Paris, evidence favours their simultaneous birth. But on which side of the Channel did this take place? There was certainly no reason why it should not have been at Saint-Germains. Melfort had known of the Brest plan for weeks. His agent Floyd on his visit to England volunteered the information to Admiral Russell. Floyd's report of his interviews with Russell and Godolphin was already in Melfort's possession. It is probable that he also knew the measures which the French had taken to strengthen and reinforce the place. The details which Churchill is said to have supplied were such as might easily have been obtained by an ordinary spy. A stroll through the camps on Portsdown Hills or through Portsmouth Dockyard would have revealed to any competent agent in the early days of May the embarkation of the troops and the impending departure of the fleet. The French War Office had known the exact numbers of the expeditionary force—seven thousand—since April. Such a report may well have reached Saint-Germains. The destination of the fleet was the only secret, and that had long ago already been penetrated, betrayed, or divulged; but could at any time be changed. There is therefore nothing in this letter which could not have been set down by Nairne and Melfort and presented by them to Mary of Modena, James, and Louis. What was needed was not information but authority, something that would associate this information with an eminent Englishman, something that would carry it safely to the highest quarters, rivet the attention of Ministers and sovereigns, and show to all how vigilant and irreplaceable were Melfort and Nairne, and how exclusive were the connexions they had established across the Channel.

We cannot convict Nairne and Melfort of inventing and fabricating the Camaret Bay Letter. We cannot expose them as the Privy Council exposed Young and his confederate Blackhead, with their equally elaborate and circumstantial charge. We cannot rank them with the celebrated political forgers of our own time—with Esterhazy of the Dreyfus Case, with Piggott of the Parnell Commission.

All we know is that they were capable of such conduct. Men who do not stop at murder for a cause will not stop at forgery. Melfort had every opportunity and all the necessary materials; he had an urgent interest at this moment in presenting something sensational to improve his own position with the French Government at the expense of Middleton, and to strengthen himself with the Queen. With this end in view he certainly fastened on Sackville with wrongful intent at least one phrase which we know that Sackville never wrote.

Here, then, is the evidence and here is the witness, the sole witness upon which this frightful charge against John, Duke of Marlborough, has been founded. In groping among these shadows of the past and stirring the dust of long-dead generations, we can do no more than reveal discrepancies and untruths, and contrast and balance probabilities. Even after exposing the tissue of falsehood in the accusation, we cannot prove a negative for the defence. But if history hesitates to frame an indictment against Melfort and Nairne or any of the cluster of exiled Jacobites and priests who formed the phantom Court of Saint-Germains, justice forbids her to pronounce on no evidence but theirs a sentence of eternal infamy upon the first of English soldiers and a chief architect of Britain's Imperial power.

Chapter Twenty-six

CAMARET BAY

1694

IT remains to recount what befell the Brest expedition. According to Dalrymple, King William

> intended that the attempt should have been made in the spring, but Admiral Russell, by private orders from King James, having accepted the command of the fleet, which had been taken from him the year before, and King James having given private instructions, through the hands of the Countess of Shrewsbury, to him, the Duke of Leeds [Danby], the Lords Shrewsbury, Godolphin and Marlborough, and others, to create delays in the fitting out of the fleet;[1] Lord Berkley, who commanded it, was not ready to sail till the first week of June.

This outrageous charge does not affect Marlborough, who, having no official employment of any kind, had no power to delay the sailing of the fleet. It is, however, flagrant against Admiral Russell, whose patriotism and inherent loyalty to the Protestant succession had been proved at Cape La Hogue, and were now about to be proved again in the Mediterranean, to which he was proceeding, in pursuit of Tourville, with the English main fleet. Before sailing the Admiral wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Trenchard, a letter which shows his care for the public interests, and ill consorts with the libel that he had been betraying them under the orders of James II:

> Now we are going, give me leave to offer to you my opinion. I shall not speak upon the business of the Straits; in that I assure you what service I am able to perform there, I will not be wanting. But those ships designed to Brest with the landmen, how successful they may be nobody can make a judgment; but 'tis to be feared that since the delay has been so much greater than could be expected or imagined, it has given the enemy time, upon the alarm, to make preparations to oppose them. Therefore may it not be convenient that the General [Tollemache] should not be tied up too strictly by his orders, that in case he has the good fortune to do service there, he may also have

[1] See a copy of these instructions in Macpherson's *Original Papers*, i, 456.

liberty, if approved of by a council of war of general officers, both of land and sea, to attempt any other place that by good information they may hope for success upon? Or, in case the opposition they meet with at Brest be so great that they can hope for little success, why may they not run to Port Louis, where I am told it is feasible to destroy, if not their ships, their magazines of stores?[1]

This warning by the Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty emphasized the Queen's instructions to Tollemache of May 11, which were in the most general terms.

. . . And when you shall come to the Rendezvous appointed, or shall otherwise join the Admiral of our Fleet, you are to advise with our said Admiral, how our said Forces may best be employed for our service, and for annoying the Enemy; and what shall be agreed upon between You and Our said Admiral; or in his absence between You and the Commander in Chief of such ships as our said Admiral shall send with You, You are to put in execution accordingly.[2]

In the first week of June Russell sailed with the whole fleet for the Mediterranean. He dropped Berkeley, with a squadron of transports containing seven thousand men, off Brest. On June 7 this squadron stood into Camaret Bay. The heavy fire of mortars from the shore batteries showed at once that the place was in the fullest state of defence and preparedness. At the council of war Lord Cutts, already an officer of proved daring, afterwards Marlborough's famous "Salamander," urged caution. He volunteered himself to go ashore with fifty grenadiers and test the severity of the fire. But Tollemache seemed strangely set upon the attempt. He recognized the danger; "the die, however," he said, "is cast; we cannot in honour retreat." Such a mood was, having regard to his orders, as unreasonable as stout-hearted. The Admirals would not be cold when the General was thus ardent. Accordingly the next morning, June 8, the squadron engaged the forts and batteries at close quarters, and Tollemache, at the head of fifteen hundred infantry, landed from boats on the sandy shore in the teeth of heavy and increasing fire. They were forthwith, while in the confusion of landing, attacked by superior numbers of French infantry, and charged by cavalry and driven back on their boats. Tollemache was wounded in the thigh. By a singular error the landing had been made upon an ebb-tide. Few of the heavy boats could be got afloat. The majority of those who had landed were killed or captured. The wounded General was carried aboard his ship, and the squadron,

[1] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 71. [2] *S.P.* (*Dom.*), Admiralty Entry Book, 205.

which had suffered severely in its duel with the forts and batteries, withdrew out of range. So serious had been the losses, amounting to nearly two thousand men, that all plans for attacking other points upon the coast were abandoned, and the expedition sailed back to Portsmouth, which was reached on the 12th. On the melancholy homeward voyage further councils of war were held. Tollemache, whose wound had become grievously inflamed, attended, and is said to have declared "that Brest was the only place he had authority to attack." He died a few days later of what was no doubt blood-poisoning from an injury with which modern war-surgery could probably easily have coped. In his last hours this brave officer mingled with expressions of his contentment to die for his country the reproach that he had been betrayed by his fellow-countrymen.

From the earliest moment a fast ship had borne the news of the repulse to England, and the Secretary of the Admiralty wrote to Lord Berkeley from Whitehall, June 13, 1694:

> I have your Lordships of the 9th instant from Camaret Bay, which I have laid before the Queen who commands me to signify to you, that she did not intend by her Order to restrain [restrict] the Lieutenant-General Tollemache to the attempting any one particular place on the Coast of France, as you will see by the enclosed Copy of the Order, and of my letter to Lieutenant General Tollemache of the 29th past, which letter I sent under cover of Colonel Gibson. . . . Her Majesty thereupon thinks fit that Your Lordship and the flag and general officers should consider further attacks on the French coast sending the result of the council of war to be laid before Her Majesty for her further pleasure.[1]

That the orders for the attack upon Brest were discretionary and depended upon the decisions of a council of senior officers in view of what they found on the spot, and that the English Government knew that the enemy had had ample warning, are all proved by William's intimate correspondence with the Duke of Shrewsbury, his principal Secretary of State. "I own to you," wrote the King from Flanders on June 18/28,

> that I did not suppose they would have made the attempt without having well reconnoitred the situation of the enemy to receive them; since they [the enemy] were well apprised of our intended attack, and made active preparations for defence; for what was practicable two months ago, was no longer so at present.[2]

[1] *S.P.* (*Dom.*), Admiralty Entry Book. For further details of the expedition, see Finch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, and House of Lords Papers, 1694–95, *H.M.C.*, pp. 484 *seq.*

[2] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 44–47.

And on June 21/July 1:

> I am affected with the loss of poor Tollemache, for although I do not approve of his conduct, yet I am of opinion that his too ardent zeal to distinguish himself, induced him to attempt what was impracticable.

To the first of these letters Shrewsbury replied on June 22:

> I never was so entirely satisfied with the design upon Brest as to be much surprised at its miscarrying, especially since the enemy had so much warning to prepare for their defence. But I always concluded it was not to be attempted in case their preparations had made it so impracticable as it is related now to appear to those who viewed it from the ships, but that they had full power to try what could be done on any other part of the coast they should find more feasible.

Shrewsbury then refers to Marlborough in terms which appear honourable and straightforward.

> Writing upon this subject it is impossible to forget what has here become a very general discourse, the probability and conveniency of Your Majesty receiving my lord Marlborough into your favour. He has been with me since this news to offer his services, with all the expressions of duty and fidelity imaginable. What I can say by way of persuasion upon this subject will signify but little, since I very well remember when Your Majesty discoursed with me upon it in the spring, you were fully convinced of his usefulness; *but some points remained of a nature too tender for me to pretend to advise upon,*[1] and of which Your Majesty is the only and best judge; who if those could be committed to Your Majesty's satisfaction I can but think he is capable of being very serviceable. It is so unquestionably his interest to be faithful, that single argument makes me not doubt it.

Now if it be true that Shrewsbury while standing in this close, friendly, confidential relation to the King was all the time betraying him, was taking his orders from James, had in pursuance of those orders already delayed the sailing of the fleet in order to give the French time to make their preparations, his conduct is wicked and repulsive beyond description. Even Marlborough's alleged villainy pales before that of a trusted Minister using the executive power to ruin an attack upon which he was sending his countrymen and friends, and of caressing with Judas kisses the King who had loaded him with honours and kindness. But is it true? The Jacobite records say it is true. Those who believe those records must say it is true. Those who believe that the Jacobite records are one of

[1] Author's italics.

the mare's-nests of history are entitled to weigh the opposite probabilities.

Consider the position and character of Shrewsbury. He was a magnifico. He dwelt upon the mountain-tops of ceremony and virtue. Although he lived till nearly sixty, he was always much concerned with the state of his health. All that he did was done in a dignified and leisurely manner. He was capable none the less, as we have seen from his conduct in 1688, of vigorous decisions. He was greatly liked. His nickname was the 'King of Hearts.' He was enormously wealthy. He loved fox-hunting; he loathed office and always longed to lay it down. His public work was disinterested. He had nothing to gain by a Jacobite restoration. He hated Catholicism with the hate of one who had quitted it. To the end of his life such part in public affairs as was extorted from him was always cast against the return of the Stuarts. It was into his hands that the dying Queen Anne gave the white staff in 1714 and thus determined the succession of the house of Hanover. Yet because he had conversed with Jacobite agents and exchanged friendly messages through his mother or through Lord Middleton with King James and thus "made his peace with Saint-Germains," we are told we must believe he was a public traitor to his country and to his cause, and a personal cheat to King William. We are sure he was neither.

There was only one man who had less incentive, less reason than Shrewsbury to play the traitor to King William and to reveal the war-secrets of the Government. That man was Danby. He was Prime Minister. He had been created by William at brief intervals Marquis of Caermarthen and now Duke of Leeds. Like Shrewsbury, he had nothing to gain by treason. He had nothing to hope for from King James that had not already been given him by King William. He was the lifelong enemy of France. He had played a leading part in making both the marriage and the Revolution which had brought King William to the throne. Whether we judge according to his self-interest or to his political convictions, it is incredible that he should have been disloyal to the Government of which he was himself the head. But the success or failure of the Brest expedition struck him not only as a Minister, but as a father. His eldest son, who, now that his father was Duke, had become Marquis of Caermarthen, according to Dalrymple, "covered the landing with equal courage, bravely fighting for that country which his father was betraying." We are invited to believe that the Prime Minister was all the time acting under the orders of James II; that he was

concerned in betraying the Brest expedition to the French; that he too conspired to delay the sailings of the English fleet until such time as the French could have made the best preparations to receive it. All this, contrary alike to nature and reason, we must accept because of a Jacobite document, purporting to emanate from James II, of October 16, 1693, headed "Instructions by the Countess of Shrewsbury to the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lords Churchill and Russell," and of a second document of the same date headed "Instructions to the Earl of Danby and Lords Godolphin and Churchill by the Countess of Shrewsbury," in which after various generalities the exiled monarch imagined himself in a position to write by an intriguing woman

> That His Majesty expects, upon this conjuncture, that the earl of Danby will do him what service he can, and most particularly, by giving him time how to act against the prince of Orange, and by letting him kno[w], as near as he can, what the said prince's designs may be, and his opinion how to prevent them. . . .
>
> Earls Shrewsbury, Danby, Godolphin, Churchill, Russell, &c. that they do, what in prudence they can, to hinder money or retard it, and hinder the going out of the fleet, so soon as it might do otherwise.

Nothing could, of course, prevent James, deceived, self-deluded, and cruelly mocked, from issuing airy orders to the void, or Jacobite partisans from preserving those orders as proofs of an authority he never possessed, and as the means of aspersing the Englishmen they had good reason to hate. What astonishes is that this rubbish should have been swallowed, in default of better nourishment, by a long succession of historians and presented to posterity in its present form.

But there is one other document impugning Danby, equally with the others, which must be mentioned. It is the third of the Nairne Papers, the Landen Memorial. This is an undated, anonymous paper in an unknown hand, evidently prepared for the benefit of the French Government. It begins by enumerating James's leading supporters in England at that time:

> The earl of Danby, prime minister to the Prince of Orange, lord Godolphin, a lord of the treasury and a member of the privy council, the earl of Shrewsbury, who has been his first secretary of state, Russell, who is of the cabinet council and has been an admiral, Churchill, who is the first lieutenant-general, the son of the duke of Beaufort and the son of the duke of Bolton. All these have served the prince

of Orange with zeal, as long as they believed he could maintain himself in England, and have despised all sort of correspondence with the King.

Macaulay did not like this document, especially no doubt the last sentence quoted above. Moreover, he wished to clear Danby of all connexion with James. The Landen Memorial did not therefore fit in with his view. He sweeps it away with magnificent disdain:

> This letter is altogether undeserving of consideration. The writer was evidently a silly hotheaded Jacobite, who knew nothing about the situation or character of any of the public men whom he mentioned. . . . Indeed the whole composition is a tissue of absurdities.[1]

We need not quarrel with him in his estimate. But why limit this scornful distrust to one particular document among the Nairne Papers? None rests on higher authority. All were equally included in the Carte Manuscripts. All have been equally printed by Macpherson. The criticism which Macaulay applies to this one applies equally to all these documents. If their evidence is conclusive when applied to Marlborough, it is equally valid against Danby and the others. Prejudice, bias, and deliberate malice can alone pick and choose. Good sense will equally reject them all.

To sum up, we assert as the basis for the future that: (1) the *Life of James II* after 1660 contained no scrap of his own handwriting, was never written by him nor seen by him, but was written by Dicconson after his death; (2) that the Nairne Papers are without exception untrustworthy or mendacious documents fabricated out of the secret service reports to Saint-Germains, of gossip which their agents had heard in England or their versions of interviews which they had obtained with leading men; (3) that it was the interest of the agents and possibly their instructions to bring as many well-known names as possible into their reports, and that it was the interest of the Court of Saint-Germains to make the most of these reports in order to influence the French Government; (4) that no holograph or autograph letter of any kind was ever written by any of the incriminated statesmen to Saint-Germains; (5) that there is no possible check upon the truth or accuracy either of the statements of the Jacobite agents or of the use made of those statements by Saint-Germains; (6) that the Camaret Bay Letter, the only one of these documents purporting to be even the copy of a letter, is more likely from the circumstances in which it was written and from internal evidence to be a fabrication than any of the other

[1] *History*, iv, 426 *n.*

Nairne Papers; (7) that there is no evidence worthy of the name that Marlborough was ever in act or intention false to the cause for the sake of which he abandoned King James at Salisbury, and that it was never his interest or wish at any moment to aid or bring about a Jacobite restoration; that, on the contrary, his interests were always opposed to it.

We assert further (8) that although there were compromising and irregular relations between King William's Ministers and the exiled King, no military or naval secret of any kind was wilfully betrayed; (9) that no advantage was reaped by the Jacobites or by the French in consequence of any wrongful or wicked action by English Ministers, admirals, or generals; and (10) that, on the contrary, all measures were taken throughout by them in loyalty, fidelity, earnestness, and industry, according to the primitive methods of those days, to prosper the fortunes of the British arms.

Chapter Twenty-seven

THE FENWICK TRIAL

1694–1697

WE now reach one of the turning points of this story. At the end of 1694 the Queen was stricken with small-pox. Anne wrote a sisterly letter and asked to be allowed to come to her bedside. A civil answer was returned by Lady Derby, then Lady-in-Waiting, declining the visit for the moment on the very natural ground that it was "so necessary to keep the Queen as quiet as possible." The postscript was added, "Pray madam present my humble duty to the Princess." Sarah's shrewd eye read into this "that the disease was mortal," and so in a few days it proved to be. On December 28 Queen Mary died, beloved and mourned by her subjects and bitterly missed by her husband.

This unforeseen event produced profound changes in the prospects and relations of those with whom this story is concerned. Hitherto the natural expectation had been that Mary would long survive her husband, upon whose frail, fiery life so many assaults of disease, war, and conspiracy converged. An English Protestant Queen would then reign in her own right. Instead of this, the crown, thanks in part to the surrender which Anne had made of her rights, devolved on William alone for life. Thereafter it must come to Anne. Any day, any month, certainly as it seemed in a few years, the Princess to whom the sentinels had been ordered to deny their salutes, whom the Mayor of Bath had been forbidden to attend to church, who dwelt quietly with her family and intimate friends in the unfashionable chambers of Berkeley House, would be Queen of the three kingdoms. And at her side, linked by ties which the whole power of the dual reign had been unable to break, would stand the redoubtable couple without whom even in their darkest fortunes it had been impossible to reckon. No wonder Berkeley House, lately so deserted, was thronged with "people of all sorts flocking," in spite of Sarah's ironical smiles, "to pay their respects to the Prince and Princess."

> The King had sense enough to know that it would be impossible to continue any longer an open difference with the Princess, without exposing himself to daily slights and a manifest disregard for his sovereign pleasure, for he could not hope that the nobility of England would be hindered, now the Queen was dead, from paying respect to a Princess who was next heir to him by Act of Parliament and who, if title by blood had taken place, would have had the crown before him; and he was well aware that everybody who had a mind to show they did not care for him would certainly do it by making their court of her.[1]

But it was no longer Marlborough's part to raise an opposition to the King. From the moment that the Queen had breathed her last his interests were the same as William's. He shared William's resolve to break the power of France. He agreed with the whole character and purpose of his foreign policy. His patience enabled him to wait with contentment for that "sunshine day" of which Anne had written. By the mediation of Sunderland and Somers a formal reconciliation was effected between William and Anne. She was received with her proper ceremony when she waited upon the King at Kensington, and St James's Palace was prepared for her use. Thither in due course she carried Sarah. But the wounds of the quarrel still rankled. The relations between the sovereign and the heiress-presumptive, if correct, were also frigid, and Marlborough remained excluded for four more years from all employment, military or civil, at the front or at home. This, however, did not sway his course of action. Although William treated him with such prolonged and marked personal hostility, he became his steady supporter, and used his graceful arts to prevent anything like a rivalry or open breach between St James's and Whitehall. He continued from time to time to receive the Jacobite agents and preserve his connexion with King James. This was an easy task, since his imprisonment and continuing disgrace at the hands of William pleaded for themselves at Saint-Germains.

Europe believed that the death of Queen Mary wou d greatly weaken William, and the Jacobites at home and in France looked forward to his speedy downfall. But in fact, owing largely to the concord re-established in the royal circle, he appeared at first even to be strengthened by his loss. His principal Ministers and advisers had long been Marlborough's friends, and were united with him by many open and some secret ties. The death of the Queen only

[1] *Conduct*, pp. 109–110.

consolidated the general accord of this strong and powerful group. Well was it so, for a new danger was already approaching.

The campaign of 1695 brought William his one success in the European war. He besieged and retook Namur in the teeth of the French armies, which now that Luxembourg was dead could find no better leader than a certain Marshal de Villeroy, destined afterwards to a more serious reverse. Some of Anne's friends and advisers urged her to make this happy event an occasion for establishing more agreeable relations with the King, and the Princess was eventually persuaded to send him her respectful but cordial congratulations. Sarah had been against this letter, expecting that it would only be treated with disdain. Her instinct was well founded. Since nothing happened, Marlborough a fortnight later wrote to Bentinck:

17 *September* 1695

This trouble is occasioned to your Lordship by a report we have that the pacquetboat is lost which went from Harwich with the letters of the 3rd instant; the Princess having written one of that date to the King to congratulate His Majesty's good success in the taking of Namur, and being apprehensive her letter may have been lost with the pacquet, and that the King may not have received the marks of her concern and satisfaction for that great honour and advantage to His Majesty, has commanded me to enclose to Your Lordship a duplicate of her letter of the 3rd, desiring the favour of you to give it to the King, in case the former has been lost, and in case you find he has had it already, to spare His Majesty that trouble.[1]

Whether this was veiled sarcasm or not, the King took no notice, and no answer seems ever to have been received.

The year 1695 was filled with activities of the Jacobites. The connexions of their party spread throughout the country. In their political clubs, in elegant society, in lonely halls and manor-houses, in the taverns and on the village greens, they held their heads high and exchanged confident salutations. They could not believe that William, deprived of his English Queen, could stand alone. Beneath all their froth upon the surface there grew at a hundred points preparation for armed rebellion, if and when the hour should strike; and beneath this again, as so often happens in movements of this character, at the root of all, there festered a murder plot. King James was privy to both designs, though it cannot be said he directly or specifically commissioned the assassins. In the autumn he sent Berwick into England to concert the insurrection. For several

[1] *Correspondence of William and Portland*, ii, 67–68.

months this daring young man moved about the country in disguise or lay hidden in London. He saw all the leading Jacobites, and endeavoured to bring their plans coherently to a head and fix the occasion.

Those who believe the Dicconson and Nairne allegations, set forth and embellished by Dalrymple and Macpherson, should find it curious that Berwick saw none of those leading politicians who we are assured were in such deep and guilty relationship with James. Above all, it must seem to them odd that he did not form contact with Marlborough, his uncle, who was out of office and under the displeasure of the Crown. One would have thought that the last man he would miss seeing was the General who only a year before had given so convincing a pledge and safeguard of his renewed loyalty to James as the betrayal of the Brest expedition in his Camaret Bay Letter. If Berwick had seen Marlborough he would certainly have recorded it in his *Memoirs*, not written until the events of his mission possessed only historical interest. No such idea ever seems to have occurred to him. Yet his father would surely not have sent him on so mortally perilous a mission without letting him know the full extent of his English connexions. The truth is that James in his inmost heart only placed limited reliance upon the friendly assurances that reached him from the Revolution leaders. They might serve to impress Louis XIV with the strength of the Jacobite movement, or as a basis for history; but James would not risk the life of a well-loved son, nor Berwick his own life upon them.

Berwick found the resources of the conspiracy were by no means inconsiderable. As many as two thousand horse, "well appointed and even regimented," were ready to take the field on the first notice, and "several people of the highest distinction were also engaged in the business." But here came the deadlock. The English Jacobites were "unanimously agreed not to throw off the mask before a body of troops was actually landed in the island." Louis XIV was willing to supply these troops, but only on one condition. After his experiences in 1692 he was determined not to launch an expedition until after a rising had actually begun. Thus on both sides of the channel the potential rebels and the contingent invaders were in suspense, and waited each on the other.

Meanwhile, independently of Berwick, James had sent over a Sir George Barclay with instructions, written throughout in his own hand, authorizing him in comprehensive terms to commit such acts of hostility against William as he might think right and practic-

able. At the same time by various routes about twenty resolute members of James's bodyguard at Saint-Germains made their way into England, and by secret signals got into touch with Barclay in London. The most deadly and resolute plot since the Gunpowder Treason was now hatched. Every Saturday King William was wont to go a-hunting, and it was designed on his return from one of these excursions to fall upon him, overpower his guards, and kill him. Turnham Green, where on his homeward journey he recrossed the river by boat and was taken up by a new coach with a new escort, was chosen for the ambuscade. For this desperate deed forty men were needed. Twenty had come from Saint-Germains. Twenty more must be found in England. In this delicate recruitment Barclay and his confederates next engaged themselves.

Berwick had now completed his dangerous mission, and could only report the seemingly insuperable obstacle which impeded either revolt or invasion. He now learned of the murder plot. His own statement upon it is remarkable:

> . . . Having moreover received information, during my stay in London, that a conspiracy was carrying on against the person of the Prince of Orange, I thought, my principal commission being at an end, I ought to lose no time to return to France that I might not be confounded with the conspirators, whose design appeared to me difficult to execute.[1]

Such an attitude in a man whose whole life was regarded in Europe as a model of soldierly uprightness reveals the cold-blooded ferocity of the times. Berwick would not himself act in the murder of William, but neither would he hamper those who did. He thought their enterprise forlorn; but that was their affair. Accordingly he made his secret way back to France at the end of the year. He found the French ports full of troops ready for a descent the moment a Jacobite rising should begin. On the road to Paris he met his father hastening to the coast. He returned with King James to Calais, and both waited there week after week for the lightning flash which would cause the explosion.

The conspirators had fixed the afternoon of Saturday, February 15, 1696, as the moment for their onslaught, and forty determined men, mounted and armed to the teeth, were gathered hard by the

[1] *Memoirs*, i, 132. C. T. Wilson, Berwick's English biographer, defends his hero by saying that Sir George Barclay only intended to "seize" the King, and "no doubt" persuaded Berwick that "the job could be done without bodily hurt to the sovereign prize." He is able to quote another passage in the *Memoirs* in support of his argument. (*James II and the Duke of Berwick* (1876), p. 401.) This can be taken for what it is worth.

landing-stage at Turnham Green. The Rye House Plot of the Whigs had got no farther than tavern talk: the Jacobite desperadoes had come to the very verge of well-concerted action. A fire was even prepared on the Dover cliffs to carry the news to the anxious party at Calais. But two of the forty, one from fear, the other from scruple, had given warning to Bentinck, and at the last moment William was with difficulty persuaded not to hunt that day.

The Government, having got some threads in their hands, speedily drew out the rest. Many of the conspirators were seized, the alarm was given, and the plot in all its gruesome reality and imminence was exposed. The nation was roused to fury. All classes rallied round the King. Parliament suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and the vast majority of its Members swore themselves into an association to defend the King's person and revenge his death. It was also resolved that Parliament should not be automatically dissolved upon a demise of the Crown from any cause, and that the succession should be instantly ensured in accordance with the Declaration of Right. Thus the confusion following the death of the King, on which James's party counted, would be effectually prevented. The trials and executions of the conspirators were speedy and not too numerous. Never had William enjoyed such popularity since the first days of his reign.

Even if the plot had not miscarried, James had no chance of regaining his lost crown across the murdered corpse of William. The leading Ministers were in the closest contact with Marlborough, and long forethought had taught them to link their future with Anne. No panic or disorder would have followed the bloody deed. Within the compass of a single day, swept upward by a wave of national indignation, Anne would have mounted the throne and Marlborough would have gripped the Army. Not a shot would have been fired. Not a dog would have barked. The new organism of government would have presented itself far stronger than the former combination. No doubt after a few months Marlborough would have again been found sending soothing messages to Saint-Germains explaining that in the temper of the nation it had been impossible for him to act otherwise, that his love for His Majesty and the debt he owed him, of which he would ever be sensible, made it his duty to preserve his Sacred Person from the certain destruction which would have awaited him on English soil; but that in other circumstances a day might come when he would be able to prove in a manner which none could doubt his unchanging

devotion to the royal cause. He might well have added a few words of caution upon the importance of the Jacobites making no movement in England when the atmosphere was so unfavourable, and against a Government under the sovereignty of King James's loving daughter and so strongly supported by his ever—at heart—faithful servant. And it is very likely James would have passed the news on to Louis to show him that hope was not even yet extinct; and history would have quoted it as proof of Marlborough's treachery to Anne. This is but a speculative epitome of the realities.

The murder plot brought in its trail a great Parliamentary drama. Sir John Fenwick was no assassin, but he was deeply involved in the preparations for rebellion. Warrants were issued for his arrest, and after some time by chance he was caught. Well born himself, he was through his wife Lady Mary, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, connected with several of the greatest families. To save himself from swift condemnation and to gain time for powerful influences to come to his aid, he wrote a confession in which he charged Marlborough, Russell, Godolphin, and Shrewsbury with treasonable correspondence with Saint-Germains. The accusation against Marlborough was that he had sent a message by Floyd to King James asking for his pardon. "The answer to my Lord Marlborough" wrote Fenwick "was, that he was the greatest of criminals where he had the greatest obligations, but if he did him extraordinary service, he might hope for pardon; and a little after he did a considerable piece of service, of which we had an account by one sent on purpose by King James."[1] It was also alleged that King James relied on Marlborough to bring over the Army to his cause. Fenwick betrayed none of his confederates, the real Jacobites who had been waiting with arms and horses for the signal of revolt. He selected only those "false Jacobites"[2] who were or had been employed in the greatest stations round King William, and who had mocked the royal exile with vain promises and deceitful homage. William was in Holland. His action when he received this confession casts a revealing light upon the politics of his reign. The King saw through Fenwick's manœuvre at a glance. He learned from it nothing that he had not known for years and discounted at its proper value. He had no intention of destroying the system upon which he ruled or of deranging the structure of his Government by tearing the heads off

[1] Fenwick's confession is printed in Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 393–396, and elsewhere.

[2] The expression is Macaulay's.

both great parties. He therefore sent the paper home to his Council with assurances to its incriminated members that his confidence in them was utterly unaffected by such nonsense. This for the moment sufficed.

But when Parliament was apprised of the confession a graver situation supervened. Nobody would have been surprised at the intrigues of Tories with the Jacobites. It was in their blood. But here were the immaculate Whigs aspersed. The House of Commons was determined to test the truth of Fenwick's accusations. Brought to the bar, he refused to amplify or prove what he had written. One Member, Colonel Godfrey, the husband of Arabella, no doubt at Marlborough's desire, specifically invited him across the chamber to state fully all he alleged against Marlborough. But Fenwick excused himself. Brought at the request of Parliament before the King, he persisted in his refusal. We must presume that, like the historians, he had no proofs, and, like them, was merely repeating the secret talk of the inner Jacobite circles. He was sent back to prison. The charge under which he lay was in any case grievous. Still, since it was not concerned with the actual murder plot, it might not have entailed the forfeit of life. But now he had drawn upon himself the wrath of both great parties, and particularly of the Whigs, who saw two of their most famous leaders impugned without proof or reason. He had also aroused the enmity alike of the powerful men he had accused, and of others whom he might have accused. He had deeply angered the King by what to William was an obvious attempt to rupture his Government. Meanwhile one of the two witnesses indispensable to the treason charge had been bribed or terrorized out of the country, and it seemed that the law stood dumb before him. It was at this stage that the Commons fell back upon the last reserve weapon of the State—an Act of Attainder.

There is no need here to describe the many vehement debates, narrow and exciting divisions, and Parliamentary situations which marked the two months' passage of the Bill through both Houses. They have been so often brilliantly told. We are not concerned with the fate of Sir John Fenwick, but only with the effects of his charges upon Marlborough and the other aspersed statesmen. None of them had been in any way concerned either in the assassination plot or in the projected rebellion. All of them had at some time or other conversed or trafficked with Jacobite agents and thus easily, in King William's phrase, "made their peace with Saint-Germains." Their prolonged ordeal was most severe. When, in a moment of intense

public feeling and widespread suspicion, men have to defend themselves from terrible charges, the fact that they have been guilty of comparatively venial conduct of the same kind, compromising in essence and still more in appearance, may shake the strongest nerve and wear down the boldest spirit.

"Every one of the accused persons," says Macaulay,

> behaved himself in a manner singularly characteristic. Marlborough, the most culpable of all, preserved a serenity, mild, majestic, and slightly contemptuous. Russell, scarcely less criminal than Marlborough, went into a towering passion, and breathed nothing but vengeance against the villainous informer. Godolphin, uneasy, but wary, reserved, and self-possessed, prepared himself to stand on the defensive. But Shrewsbury, who of all the four was the least to blame, was utterly overwhelmed.[1]

It is true that Shrewsbury crumpled under the strain. On September 8, 1696, he wrote to the King a letter which is most instructive, both in itself and for the answer it received:

> . . . After your Majesty was pleased to allow me to lay down my employment, it was more than a year before I once saw my lord Middleton; then he came, and staid in town awhile, and returned to the country; but a little before the La Hogue business, he came up again, and upon that alarm, being put in the Tower, when people were permitted to see him, I visited him as often as I thought decent, for the nearness of our alliance. [They were relations.] Upon his enlargement, one night at supper, when he was pretty well in drink, he told me he intended to go beyond seas, and asked if I would command him no service. I then told him, by the course he was taking, it would never be in his power to do himself or his friends service; and if the time should come that he expected, I looked upon myself as an offender not to be forgiven, and therefore he should never find me asking it. In the condition he was then, he seemed shocked at my answer; and it being some months after before he went, he never mentioned his own going, or any thing else, to me, but left a message with my aunt [Middleton's wife] that he thought it better to say nothing to me, but that I might depend upon his good offices upon any occasion, and in the same manner he relied upon mine here; and had left me trustee for the small concerns he had in England. I only bowed, and told her I should always be ready to serve her, or him, or their children.
>
> Your majesty now knows the extent of my crime, and if I do not flatter myself, it is no more than a King may forgive.
>
> I am sure when I consider with what reason, justice, and generosity

[1] *History* iv, 723–724.

your majesty has weighed this man's information I have little cause to apprehend your ill opinion upon his malice. I wish it were as easy to answer for the reasonableness of the generality of the world. When such a base invention shall be made public, they may perhaps make me incapable of serving you; but if till now I had had neither interest nor inclination, the noble and frank manner with which your majesty has used me upon this occasion, shall ever be owned with all the gratitude in my power.

This confession fell short of the facts. William knew more from the Jacobite talk of the day. But the King set himself to comfort his Minister. "In sending you Sir John Fenwick's paper," he wrote,

I assured you, that I was persuaded his accusation was false, of which I am now fully convinced, by your answer, and perfectly satisfied with the ingenuous confession of what passed between you and Lord Middleton, which can by no means be imputed to you as a crime. And indeed you may be assured, that this business, so far from making on me any unfavourable impression, will, on the contrary, if possible, in future, strengthen my confidence in you, and my friendship can admit of no increase.[1]

But Shrewsbury was inconsolable. He buried himself in the country. He declared that a fall out hunting had rendered him unfit for public business. Certainly his health broke down completely. He repeatedly but in vain besought William to allow him to resign. Meanwhile he seems to have left Marlborough to watch over his interests, for we have one of Marlborough's very rare letters in this period to him:

December 2, 1696

Wednesday night—

Although I have not troubled your Grace with my letters I have not been wanting in inquiring constantly how you did. I did about a fornight ago write a letter to acquaint you with what I had observed of some people, in hopes Mr Arden would have called upon me as he promised, but I did not care to send it by post, and so it was burnt. We had yesterday Sir Jo. Fenwick at the House, and I think all went as well as you could wish. I do not send you the particulars, knowing you must have it more exactly from others; but on this occasion I should be wanting if I did not let you know that Lord Rochester has behaved himself on all this occasion like a friend; and in a conversation he had with me he expressed himself as a real servant of yours, and I think it would not be amiss if you took notice of it to him. . . .[2]

[1] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 147–148, 151. William's reply is dated September 10/20.

[2] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.* ii, 427.

Wharton also wrote to Shrewsbury describing what happened when Fenwick came before the Lords:

> . . . after the reading of the paper, my lord Marlborough first stood up and spoke to this purpose: "that he did not wonder to find a man in danger, willing to throw his guilt upon any other body; that he had some satisfaction to be owned in such good company; but that he assured their lordships that he had [had] no sort of conversation with him, upon any account whatsoever, since this Government, which he said upon his word and honour." . . . After which my lord Godolphin said, "that he found himself named in two places, first, as having been looked upon as being in King James's interest, from the beginning, and afterwards, as having entered into a negotiation, as was expressed in the paper. As to the first, he confessed he was one of those that had, to the last, continued in King James's service, and he did not know, but from that, King James and his friends might imagine him to continue in that interest, but as to the latter part, there was nothing in the world so false."[1]

In the course of these proceedings a peculiar complication had arisen. Mordaunt, already mentioned as Monmouth, and afterwards Earl of Peterborough, although himself an alleged Jacobite, impelled by his mischievous instincts and the hope of throwing the Government into disorder, endeavoured secretly to persuade Fenwick through his wife to point and elaborate his charges, especially against Marlborough, assuring him that this was the path to safety. Fenwick pondered anxiously upon this suggestion. Ailesbury was a fellow-prisoner in the Tower. Though never a serious rebel, he was an avowed Jacobite and had been drawn unwitting into dangerous company on more than one occasion. Fenwick endeavoured to persuade Ailesbury to join with him in pressing his charges.[2] Ailesbury probably knew as much as Fenwick of all that had been whispered for some time past in the ranks of the English Jacobites. His appearance beside Fenwick at the bar with corroborative allegations would, in the then temper of both Houses, and still more of the public, have created an ugly situation for Marlborough and the impugned Ministers. Ailesbury, however, was, as we have noted, a friend of Marlborough's. They had been thrown together at Court in the days of Charles II. He therefore sought Marlborough's

[1] December 1, 1696, Coxe; *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 438–439. According to the Dutch envoy, L'Hermitage, Marlborough also said in the course of this speech "que depuis son départ [from King James in 1688] on ne sauroit l'accuser de la moindre chose." Add. MSS. 17677, Q.Q., f. 626.

[2] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 414.

advice through channels which were open. The counsel he received was to have nothing to do with Fenwick and to remain quiet till after the execution, when he would soon be released and all would be well.[1] He had the wisdom to act accordingly, and ever afterwards believed that he had rendered Marlborough an important personal service. Fenwick, unsupported by Ailesbury, rejected Monmouth's suggestions. Monmouth, angered at this, turned against him with extreme bitterness. Lady Mary Fenwick then in revenge exposed Monmouth's conduct to the Lords. There was general indignation at this mischief-mongering. He was stripped of his offices and sent to the Tower, from which he was released only upon abject apologies. But this was not the end of him.

The process of attainder crawled remorselessly forward stage by stage. Marlborough, entirely unaffected by the strain which had broken Shrewsbury and intimidated Godolphin, comported himself with the confidence and vigour of a man conscious of his own innocence. He actively pressed forward the Bill, and voted for it in the important divisions.[2] Calmly and inexorably he threw his whole influence against Fenwick, and it was publicly remarked that he was zealous for his condemnation. His brother George Churchill, who had commanded a ship at the battle of La Hogue with credit and was a member of the House of Commons, observed less decorum. "Damn him!" he exclaimed, with brutal frankness, in the Lobby; "thrust a billet down his throat. Dead men tell no tales."[3] But in truth Fenwick had no tales to tell. He had founded his charges on nothing but hearsay; he had no proof of any kind.

The Court of Saint-Germains and the Jacobite world watched his ordeal with intense emotion. They saw him a martyr for their cause. Was there, then, no means by which they could save him? Was this faithful, heroic man to be hounded to his death by that very "deserter of Salisbury" who had eighteen months before betrayed, as we are assured they knew, the secret of the Brest expedition? Where was the Camaret Bay Letter? Now was the time to use it. It was not even necessary to publish it. The mere threat privately conveyed to Marlborough that it would be sent to King William, unless he quitted his pursuit of Fenwick, would surely have sufficed. When we realize the passion which is excited by the shedding of blood for political

[1] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, pp. 413–415.

[2] *Cf.* Vernon to Shrewsbury, November 24, 1696: "He [Marlborough] seems very hearty in this matter [Fenwick's attainder] and as if he would push it." (*The Vernon Letters*, i, 72.)

[3] Ailesbury, *Memoirs* p. 412.

crimes, it is incredible that James, Melfort, and Nairne, if they had had this hold over Marlborough, did not use it; or that in the presence of such a threat he would have dared to persevere against Fenwick. We are told that there was a letter at Saint-Germains of such a character that the mere sight of it twenty years after frightened the Duke of Marlborough out of England.[1] Surely they owed it to Fenwick to use their weapon now in his defence? Why did they not do it? The answer is, because it did not exist. Thus Marlborough sternly pursued his course as if his conscience were clear of any shameful or deadly deed. Perhaps it was. Sir John Fenwick was beheaded on Tower Hill on January 28, 1697.

[1] See above, pp. 376-378.

Chapter Twenty-eight

AVARICE AND CHARM

THERE is no virtue so universally unpopular as frugality. Every one likes the handsome spender who offers lavish hospitality and eases his path through life by a shower of money. Every one dislikes the parsimonious man who is gathering rather than dispersing wealth. Censure is particularly turned upon those who are careful about small sums. In the days of which we are writing all who held high public appointments were accustomed and expected to live in fine style and at a profuse expense. The habit of the medieval knight flinging his purse to the landlord, or a piece of gold to a lackey, was unconsciously adopted as a guide for a gentleman. Public opinion was more critical about how important people spent their money than about how they acquired it. Graft, pilfering, and corruption, unless too flagrant, were leniently judged in the governing circle; stinting and saving were resented as peculiar. It does not, however, follow that those who are the most extravagant and easy with their money are the most unselfish, nor that those who are the most niggardly are the most mean. There is a happy medium which can only be defined for each individual by the general opinion of the society in which he lives.

Judged by this standard, Marlborough lay under reproach. He was at once highly acquisitive in the gaining of money and extremely careful in the spending of it. In those days, when almost the only other form of wealth was landed property, public appointments all had a recognized money value. Every step in the commissioned ranks of the Army, whether gained by seniority or good service, had to be purchased. A captaincy, a majority, a colonelcy, the command of a regiment, of a troop of Life Guards; a high post in the Quartermaster-General's department, a seat upon the Board of Admiralty, even the offices of the Court and around the Royal Person, all passed to new recipients of the royal favour at a market price which varied with supply and demand like the membership of the New York Stock Exchange. An officer without means could not take his promotion. An officer who had reached high rank was

a substantial proprietor, carrying with him in his own person and his appointments the cumulative and reinvested savings of his career. In all but extreme cases these vested interests were respected. There was nothing secret or corrupt about them. They were the system and the custom, and it is only within living memory that the principle of purchase was abolished in the British Army. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries those who had no money had no standing. All who held offices of authority were men of property whose relative worldly wealth could be appraised almost as accurately by the positions they filled as by the acres they owned. The Crown and the Executive found in this system guarantees of fidelity and good conduct, and no one troubled himself about the obstacles placed in the path of unpropertied ability. Instances there were to the contrary; but in the main it was not until the French Revolution that the glorious principle of *la carrière ouverte aux talents* was proclaimed or even comprehended.

Marlborough's childhood had been lived in penury. Food and clothing in Ashe House for Sir Winston Churchill's lusty brood were inferior in quantity and quality, and above all in variety, to the standard of a well-to-do modern English artisan or strong, industrious navvy. While old silver appeared upon the tables, while the living-rooms contained pieces of furniture which persons of taste would now value and admire, while the family escutcheon boasted the achievements of many generations, the physical conditions were primitive and narrow. But to Marlborough's early years there was an added sting. He learned almost as soon as he could walk and speak that he and his father and mother were dependants upon the charity and goodwill of his grandmother. As he grew older he saw the straits to which the impoverishments of a Cavalier had reduced his father. He heard the talk of the exactions of the Roundheads and of the frequent litigation for quite small sums in which all the grown-ups of the household were engaged with the Government or with the other members of their family. When, for his father's services and his own good looks, he was taken as a page at Court, he was penniless. He might be finely dressed and well fed, but he was penniless among those who monopolized a large proportion of the entire wealth of the kingdom. On every side his seeming equals were youths of noble fortune, heirs to vast estates and splendid titles. He was the earthenware pot among the iron ones. This was his second strong impression of life.

Before he was eighteen he realized that, unless he could make

and save money, he could neither have a career, nor a bride, nor a home, nor even a modest independence. It is therefore not at all surprising, however unromantic, that his first preoccupation was the gathering of money. In his twenties and thirties his temper was very similar to that which we have attributed to the French nation —always more generous of life than treasure, ready to encounter every personal hazard, prodigal of blood, but deeply concerned about money. His thrift was not without a certain grandeur, a habit of self-denial differing altogether from a miser's sordidness. We have seen how when, after heartbreaking postponements, he married a girl almost as poor as himself he could offer her no home. We have seen him at twenty-eight marrying for love, and at the same time helping his father out of debt by resigning his own reversionary interest in the small family estate. In all supreme matters his actions were those of a generous spirit. His need and desire to possess a competence and not to be crippled in his career did not outweigh—nay, were cast aside by—true love and family duty.

But these great decisions only made thrift and circumspection more imperative. He could not afford to gamble and carouse with his equals. He could not indulge in the slightest personal extravagance. He ate sparingly, drank little, always more readily at the expense of others than his own, and eschewed all kind of display in dress. He was always strict and punctilious in money matters. He paid his bills with the utmost promptitude. He condescended to keep careful accounts in his own handwriting about quite small household affairs, and generally behaved more like a tradesman whose livelihood depends upon his honesty and solvency than like a gay and gallant courtier and fine gentleman. Even now, fifteen years later, after having held several lucrative posts, he was by far the poorest man in the high circle in which he had taken his natural place. He was an Earl, but the most impecunious in England. He was the first Lieutenant-General, but unemployed. He had braved the displeasure of the Crown. It might well be that his career was closed for many years. The slightest financial imprudence would be fatal to his future. Thus he continued those habits of strict and austere personal economy which had been ingrained in childhood and youth, and without which he would certainly have been submerged.

All this was very deplorable, and no doubt the historians are right to mock and sneer at him. But their taunts are only an echo of the gibes and jokes of his contemporaries. Probably many stories

of meanness were fastened on him, once he had that reputation, which are not true. But, true or false or merely exaggerated, they must be accepted by his biographer as representing the impression of the society in which he lived. He had, we are told, in 1692 but three coats ("depuis trois ans il n'a fait que trois habits modestes"), one of which he wore only on the greatest State occasions. "He was," wrote Sarah, "naturally genteel, without the least affectation, and handsome as an angel, tho' ever so carelessly drest." He would walk home from the Palace through the muddy streets to save the hire of a sedan chair. He entertained very few. Even when he wished to gain officers of the Army to his faction, he spent nothing on their meat and drink. Macaulay is no doubt right in stating gleefully that when he was robbed of five hundred guineas by a highwayman it was a bitter blow.[1]

The tales of his great period are more fanciful; but in him, if true, less excusable. "Of the wonderful avarice of this very great man," wrote Seward in his *Anecdotes*, published in 1795,

> the late Lord Bath used to tell the following story: Himself and his brother, General Pulteney (who had been Aid-du-Camp to the Duke in Flanders), were playing at cards at a house in Bath, at that time known by the name of Westgate House, and which then happened to be the lodgings of Lord Bath. The Duke had lost some money, and on going away desired General Pulteney to lend him sixpence [*i.e.*, about half a crown] to pay his chair-hire. This he of course did, and when the Duke had left the room, Lord Bath said to his brother, "I would venture any sum, now, that the Duke goes home on foot. Do pray follow him out." The General followed him and to his astonishment saw him walk home to his lodgings.[2]

Seward tells another tale which seems to show the Duke kept accounts, even with his beloved Sarah, but which certainly does not show him so niggardly in large as in petty sums of money.

> The Duke had noticed the behaviour of a young officer in an engagement in Flanders, and sent him over to England with some despatches, and with a letter to the Duchess, recommending him to her to procure a superior Commission for him in the army. The Duchess read the letter, and approved of it, but asked the young man where the thousand pounds were for his increase of rank [*i.e.*, the purchase money he had to pay on promotion to the officer whose vacancy he filled]. The young man blushed, and said that he was really master of no such sum.

[1] Denbigh Papers, *H.M.C.*, vii, 220; the Duchess of Marlborough to David Mallet, October 4, 1744 (Spencer MSS.); Luttrells' *Diary*, ii, 550; Macaulay, iv, 296.

[2] P. 257.

> "Well, then," said she, "you may return to the Duke." This he did very soon afterwards, and told him how he had been received by the Duchess. The Duke laughingly said, "Well, I thought that it would be so; you shall, however, do better another time," and presenting him with a thousand pounds, sent him over to England. The last expedition proved a successful one.[1]

There is the story on which Swift founded the scathing insult "that he had risked his life for a pair of stockings." When as Commander-in-Chief the gaiters he wore were so drenched that they had to be cut off him, he gave meticulous instructions to his orderly, before a number of officers, apparently without any proper sense of shame, to rip them up the seams, so that they could be resewn.[2] There is the story that Prince Eugene

> gave a concise characteristic of him upon receiving a letter from him that he could not read, therefore gave it to another person to try if he could read it to him. He said one difficulty was that he never put a tittle upon an *i*, to which the Prince answered, "That saved ink."[3]

His handwriting, as the reader may see for himself, disproves this tale: and Eugene might only have been amusing himself by emphasizing a foible in a friend and comrade he ever admired. But let that pass.

There is the story of the officer who brought a message at night to his tent. The Duke, roused from slumber, asked him whether it was in writing or by word of mouth, and on learning that it was not written said, "Then put out the lantern."[4] Possibly he did not wish the way he took the news to be noticed. But never mind: he may well have been saving tallow.[5] It seems undeniable that when he planned the celebrated march to the Danube he also scheduled which brigades and divisions of his army he would dine with at the different dates, without, of course, disclosing the places where the camps would lie. The splendid silver wine-flasks, or pilgrim bottles —as big as small barrels—which have been so much admired travelled with him in his campaigns; but they and other luxurious

[1] P. 258.

[2] Lansdowne MSS., 825, f. 121. G. M. Trevelyan, *Ramillies and the Union with Scotland*, p. 7.

[3] Dartmouth, note to Burnet, iii, 267. For an example of Marlborough's clear handwriting see plate facing p. 240. Eugene's own writing is very much less legible than Marlborough's. The same story was told at the same time of a Professor of History at Basel (*The Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (edition 1928), p. 66).

[4] *Cf.* Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 258.

[5] The great Moltke, brought up in the sparse austerity of Old Prussia, was always noticeably particular about snuffing the candles.

trappings were used only on State occasions when it was his duty to entertain the princes and generals of the Grand Alliance, or for some special rejoicing. "Though no epicure himself," says Seward,

> the Duke had, in common with Louis XIV, a pleasure in seeing others eat, and when he was particularly pleased exercised this pleasure, though it cost him something. Lord Cadogan used to say that he remembered seeing the Duke completely out of humour one day, a thing very unusual with him, and much agitated; in the evening, however, a messenger arrived who brought him some news which he liked. He immediately ordered the messenger to be placed in a situation where no one could speak to him, and ordered his coach to be opened, and some cantines to be taken out, containing hams and other good things, and spread before some of the principal officers, he looking on and tasting nothing.[1]

This incident was perhaps typical. Ordinarily, instead of keeping, as was the custom of generals in the field of those days, a sumptuous open table to which a fine company sat down every night when war permitted, Marlborough lived very simply with his immediate personal staff. This, again, was a grievous fault in a General at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Brigadiers and even Colonels were attended by sumpter-horses and wagons suitable to their dignity. Although hard fare was recognized to be the lot of the private men and subordinate officers, and such as their station required, it was most inappropriate that the Commander-in-Chief of the main army of a European coalition with princely revenues at his disposal should not travel and dine in the luxury of his august position. What a pitiful contrast to the style in which the Great Monarch took the field! No mistresses; no actors, no poets, no painters, not even a historian—except the chaplain, Dr Hare; no proper following of toadies and hangers-on; no roads blocked with convoys of cooks and comforts—just coarse, squalid simplicity basely interested in saving sixpence! Simplicity swayed by that shabby thought! Where, then, is the glory of war? How could any man who fell so far short of the spirit of war in those days hope to win glory? But battles are imperious, contrary things, and one has to reckon with battles.

Marlborough seems to have regarded war merely as a serious business in which he was interested to the exclusion of pleasures and personal indulgences. All this puts his admirers to shame. One feels that virtues, valour, and victories alike are tarnished by such

[1] Seward, *Anecdotes*, p. 257.

traits. We blush; but we must not conceal these shocking facts or legends. The truth is that from his upbringing and the pressures of his life he had acquired a hatred of waste of money in all its forms, and especially of frittering away comparatively small sums. He resembled a certain type of modern millionaires, who accumulate wealth unceasingly, spend hardly anything upon themselves, and use their fortunes for the well-being of their families and the endowment of their children, or apply them to great buildings or public objects.

He was like them in other ways. He had that curious mixture of business capacity and Imperial vision which in our own day excited the admirers and the critics of Cecil Rhodes. In 1666 two French-Canadian Protestants who had opened up the fur trade around Hudson Bay, but had found no support from their own Government either in Quebec or Paris, came to England and obtained an audience of King Charles II. After a successful voyage a permanent company was formed. In 1670 the King granted a charter "to the Governor and Company of adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay." Prince Rupert, twelve times re-elected till his death, was the first Governor. In 1683 James, Duke of York, was elected to succeed him. On James's accession John Churchill was chosen. He thus became the third[1] Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. "The new governor," we are told, "threw himself heartily into the work of the Company."[2] In 1688 it declared a dividend of 50 per cent.; in 1689 a dividend of 25 per cent. was paid; in 1690 of 75 per cent.; and in that year it was decided to triple by a share-splitting operation the value of its original stock. Nor was the expansion of the original £10,500 capital unjustified. The stocks in the warehouse were alone worth that sum; the trapping of the year was expected to bring in £20,000 worth of beaver; and a claim for damages against the French for £100,000 was to be made. The Company then decided to increase its trade and widen the scale of its operations. The river running into the west side of the bay far to the north was named, in honour of the new Governor, Churchill River, and at its mouth in 1686 a new port and trading centre for the north and west of Canada was founded. This project is alive to-day. Many instances are given by the historians of the Hudson's Bay Company of the energy and helpfulness of Lord Churchill.

Churchill's part in the Revolution gave the company a good position in the new reign. In June 1689 he sent out instructions for

[1] Not, as Lord Wolseley says, the second.

[2] G. Bryce, *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (1900), p. 30.

William and Mary to be proclaimed in the posts on the shores of the bay. "He was able shortly after to report to his Company that a hundred marines had been detailed to protect the Company's ships." The enthusiasm of the directors and shareholders at this mark of consideration obtained through the influence of Lord Churchill was very great, and we learn from the minutes that profuse thanks were given to the Governor, and a piece of plate of solid gold worth a hundred guineas was presented to him for his distinguished services. His arrest and imprisonment in 1692 cut through these happy proceedings. It was indispensable to the Company that its monopoly and its charter should have a Governor with great influence at Court. Churchill's dismissal from the Army and all official employments, which we have already described, carried with it this private loss as well. In November 1692 Sir Stephen Evance was elected Governor in his place.

His habit of personal economy extended to the whole control of Marlborough's armies. He was always worrying about the cost of things in a manner that seemed most petty and unbecoming. It was remarkable, indeed, that he was so popular with the troops; but, then, of course, he always took care that they got their rations and pay punctually, and the country people were always paid promptly for their supplies, so that the rank and file did not feel his cheese-paring at all, and only saw the victories. This naturally prevented their making a true judgment of his meanness. These simple common soldiers only noticed that they were well looked after and never once led to failure of any kind. Little did they know about the candle story or the gaiters story. Little would they have cared if they had—so defective was their sense of proportion. Indeed, they might only have made jokes about it, and loved him all the more. But history cannot be thus easily satisfied; and we must record the truth. Both Frederick the Great and Napoleon were remarkable for the economy with which they managed their armies. But Marlborough made money go farther in the field than either, or, indeed, than any commander then or since, except perhaps Sir Herbert Kitchener, who kept the accounts of his reconquest of the Sudan as if he had been the manager of an emporium.

We have tried, however painful it may be, to set this out with naked candour. There are, on the other hand, a few mitigating features which may also be mentioned. Paget says:

> His declining, when in poverty and disgrace, to accept the generosity of the Princess Anne; his repeated refusal of the government of the

> Netherlands, with its princely income of £60,000 a year; his generosity to young and deserving officers; his application of all the money at his private disposal amongst the wounded officers of the enemy after the battle of Malplaquet; his liberal provision during his own lifetime for his children . . .[1]

are all to be counted in his favour. When to these are added his early imprudences of marrying for love and paying his father's debts at the expense of his inheritance, it may perhaps be recognized that he was not wholly base and sordid. We do not venture to press the point too far.

Sarah's testimony must, of course, be viewed with extreme suspicion as that of a wife hopelessly prejudiced—indeed, shamefully biased—in her husband's favour. You can do nothing with such people. Still, a wife has exceptional opportunities of seeing the seamy side of a husband's character. Moreover, Sarah does not conceal what is unworthy. "From the very beginning of his life," she wrote,

> he never spent a shilling beyond what his income was. . . . The Duke of Marlborough had never any vanity, and therefore living so many years with great employments, he left a great estate: which was no wonder he should do, since he lived long and never threw any money away. And money was for many years at six per cent. And I have heard him solemnly swear, when it was of no signification to do it to me, that he never in the whole reign of Queen Anne sold one commission, title, or anything to any body when he had so much favour from Queen Anne. He had a great deal of compassion in his nature, and to those that he had been long acquainted with he gave money out of his pocket to those that were poor, tho' they were not of his opinion. I am living witness of this: for I was directed by him to pay some pensions when he was abroad, and have letters that prove the truth of it from the persons.[2]

Apparently Marlborough's economies only fell upon himself and did not extend to his home and family. "Soon after my marriage," Sarah says again,

> when our affairs were so narrow that a good degree of frugality was necessary, Lord Marlborough, *tho his Inclination lay enough that way*,[3] yet by reason of an indulgent gentleness that is natural to him he could not manage matters so as was convenient for our circumstances, this obliged me to enter into the management of my family.[4]

It is said that, though Marlborough was stingy in small matters —tips and the like—which may well be taken as proved against

[1] *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 12, quoting Alison. *Marlborough*, i, 283; ii, 394–395.
[2] Appendix, II. [3] Sarah's italics. [4] Appendix, I.

him, he was uncommonly courteous and considerate to his subordinates and inferiors in the social scale, and a most kind-hearted man. "For his natural good temper," says Ailesbury, "he never had his equal. He could not chide a servant and was the worst served possible, and in command he could not give a harsh word, no not to the meanest Sergeant, Corporal, or soldier."[1] We have found a new confirmation of Ailesbury's testimony that Marlborough, for all his sagacity in large matters, and ridiculous small personal economies, was gentle to the point of laxity with his servants.[2]

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 521.

[2] *Marlborough to Sarah* (Blenheim MSS.)

"HAGUE,
"*April* 7, 1711

★"I have had the pleasure of yours of the 21 by Sr. R[ichard] T[emple] but none by the post. As to my opinion about the selling of Montague House, if the young people could get forty thousand pounds, and be so wise as to pay off so much of their debt, I should be of opinion it were a prudent action, but then they must not think of building, but be contented with such a house as might be bought or hired.

"I desire you will send for Will Lovegrove, and shew him this enclosed paper so that I may know where to find my wine, for it is not in my cellar; if it be possible, I should be glad to know where this wine is before I leave this place, which will be about the end of next week.

"*encloses* [in the Duke's own hand]
a list of the remainder of stores given me by Will: Lovegrove when I went last for England, and I expected to have found in my cellar, but find no more than what is mentioned on the other side.

2 Pieces of old Mossell
5 Pieces of New Mossell
17 dossen of old Sack
9 dossen pints of Sack
3 dossen quarts } Sr. Hen: furnis
4 dossen pints }
9 dossen quarts of Barbados Water
14 quarts of Usqu bath
12 bottles of Italian Wine
29 bottles of King Augustus Tuckay
80 bottles of Pr. Royalles old Tuckay
17 bottles of what came last from Pr. Royall the rest put into the Caske
2 Caskes with that which is fild upp

[On the other side]
An Acct of what Wine was found in His Graces Cellar att the Hague—

Pieces of Rhenish	4
Pieces of Tockay	2
Quart bottles of Tockay	13
Pints ditto	12
Quart bottles of Barbadoes Water	6
Quart bottles of Sack	10
Pints ditto	21

[Endorsed by Sarah]
this Will Lovegrove cheated & sold the Duke's wine, & most of his servants were of the same sort."

To this the sprightly Paget has rejoined:

> As *L'Avare* was first acted in 1667, it is certainly possible that the Jacobites may have applied to the great object of their hatred the name of Harpagon; but as Pope was not born until 1688, the voices "muttering that Marlborough was a mere Euclio" which had to be drowned in 1689, must have been confined to the readers of the *Aulularia* of Plautus. . . .[1]

Macaulay admits that the only authority for this poisonous paragraph is *The Dear Bargain*, a Jacobite pamphlet clandestinely printed in 1690.[2] He copied from *The Dear Bargain* almost word for word the passage quoted above and paused only to add a few picturesque and unwarranted flourishes of his own.[3] *The Dear Bargain* is a long tirade of virulent abuse primarily directed against William and Mary in which Marlborough is only incidentally insulted. We know Macaulay's opinion of Jacobite pamphlets and pamphleteers in so far as they attack the characters whose virtues he had determined to extol. Nothing can exceed the vehemence of the scorn which he poured upon these "habitual liars." Yet he does not hesitate to found his charges against Marlborough upon the very same evidence which he throws aside disdainfully when it accuses William of "abominations as foul as those which lie buried under the waters of the Dead Sea."[4] His principle is simple and convenient; Jacobite pamphleteers are worthy of credence only when they attack Marlborough.

It is certainly odd that Macaulay in the passage quoted above should censure Marlborough because, "though he drew a large allowance under pretence of keeping a public table, he never asked an officer to dinner." We have little doubt that Marlborough economized on all his public allowances; but the criticism comes ill from Macaulay. He has confessed that he accepted a seat on the Supreme Council of India in 1833 mainly in order to accumulate a fortune, and he managed to save annually the greater part of his salary of £10,000 by living below the style expected in the East from officers of the highest rank. We do not blame Macaulay for his thrift. It was indeed important to our country that his closing years should have been freed from financial embarrassment. But that he of all men should feel able to cast this particular reproach at Marlborough shows some obliquity of vision.

[1] Macaulay, iii, 438. Paget, *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 12. [2] *Somers Tracts*, x, 349.
[3] See author's italics in the passage quoted above from Macaulay.
[4] *History*, iv, 559.

It is probably a just conclusion that Marlborough's conduct was above and not below the standards of his time; that though he took all the emoluments, perquisites, and commissions which belonged to his offices and appointments, he never took bribes or any money that was not his by usage or law. Although he always recognized the claims of natural love and affection, as in choosing his wife, in helping his father, or providing for his children, and set these far above riches, his own deep-rooted habits of personal thrift and self-denial were carried to a point which drew upon him the mockery of his envious contemporaries and of malicious historians. Yet these same habits, unpleasing though they may seem, were an essential part of his character as a gatherer, as a builder and a founder. They were mitigated or often baffled by the pervasive kindness of his nature. They arose from the same methodical, patient, matter-of-fact spade-work which characterizes all his conduct of war, and formed the only basis upon which the great actions for which he is renowned could have sprung. His handling of his private affairs was as grave, as strongly marked by common sense, and as free from indulgence or unwisdom as his conduct of politics and war. His private fortune was amassed upon the same principles as marked the staff-work of his campaigns, and was a part of the same design. It was only in love or on the battlefield that he took all risks. In these supreme exaltations he was swept from his system and rule of living, and blazed resplendent with the heroic virtues. In his marriage and in his victories the worldly prudence, the calculation, the reinsurance, which regulated his ordinary life and sustained his strategy, fell from him like a too heavily embroidered cloak, and the genius within sprang forth in sure and triumphant command.

Chapter Twenty-nine

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

1696–1698

IN its eighth year the so-called War of the League of Augsburg came to an inconclusive end. The Maritime Powers and Germany had defended themselves successfully, but were weary of the barren struggle. Spain was bellicose, but useless. After the withdrawal of the English fleet from the Mediterranean the Duke of Savoy made peace with France, and the Emperor and the King of Spain were constrained to accept the neutralization of Italy. Only the Emperor, with his eyes fixed on the ever-impending vacancy of the Spanish throne, was earnest to keep the anti-French confederacy in being. But this same reason dictated an opposite policy to France. Louis had no mind to see the Spanish empires in the Old and New World become the prize which should inspire all the banded enemies of France with renewed comradeship and ardour. He understood the numerous strains which were rending the Grand Alliance. He saw that it was falling to pieces under the pressure of so many fruitless campaigns. Once resolved into its component parts, the reconstitution of so ponderous and complicated an engine might well be impossible. He believed that no hand but William's could reassemble it; and how long would William last? Peace would dissolve the hostile coalition. Many of its members would lay aside their panoply and go their several ways disarmed. But the great central Power which had hitherto withstood them all, albeit narrowly, would under his absolute sovereignty refit her armies, revive her strength, and pursue her aims better at the moment by peace than by war. Moreover, the long struggle against all Europe had seriously affected the strength of the French nation. Louis therefore at the end of 1696 made overtures of peace to William. It gradually became clear that France would restore all her conquests in the Low Countries and on the Rhine made since the Peace of Nimwegen except only Strasburg; and for Strasburg she would give an ample substitute.

William, with his lifelong knowledge of Europe, comprehended

perfectly the meaning of these proposals. But the pressure for peace, especially in England, convinced him that he had not the power to reject them. The negotiations, opened under Swedish mediation at Ryswick, were protracted. The French, who had been able to draw fifty thousand of their troops from the Italian theatre for the northern front, were in no hurry to close the campaign. The differences between the allies, an elaborate ceremonial, and the necessary adjustments of points of dignity and honour occupied the rest of 1697. The Emperor, who wanted Strasburg, protested strongly. Considering, however, that he had himself made a separate agreement neutralizing the Italian front and liberating the French army operating there, his position was not morally strong. The Spaniards were tamed by disasters at Barcelona and at Cartagena, in the Indies. The English Parliament clamoured for a settlement.

It was not till October 1697 that the group of treaties bringing back peace to the whole world was completed. Apart from the territorial arrangements, Louis agreed tacitly and under curious reserves to recognize William as King of the three kingdoms. He refused to abandon James II by name, but he contracted not to support any enemies of England, adding the words "without any exception," which, since they covered the Prince of Wales as well as the exiled King, were by no means unacceptable. He also withdrew his demand that the mass of the Jacobite refugees apart from the Royal Family should return under an amnesty to their native land. He restored the principality of Orange to its redoubtable owner, stipulating only that no French Huguenots should reside there. William on his part abated his claim that James and his Court should leave French soil, and by a provision which casts a revealing light upon the cool mood of the times undertook to pay to Mary of Modena a jointure ultimately fixed at £50,000 a year. Thus all the polite society of Europe bowed and scraped amicably to one another, and all its harassed peoples rested from their painful strife.

The five-year interlude between the first nine and the last ten years of this world war is commonly viewed as a mere truce. In fact, however, the situation after the Treaty of Ryswick contained many elements of peace. Certainly all its signatories sincerely hoped to accomplish their aims without further resort to arms. All were weary of costly and desultory strife. The great antagonisms of Europe remained; the perils of the Spanish succession impended; but there was an earnest resolve, shared in various degrees by sovereigns, governments, and peoples, to exhaust every method

of diplomacy and bargaining before again drawing the sword. The Peace of Ryswick left in Europe two great figures instead of one. Louis XIV recognized in William III almost an equal. The Great Monarch, for all his splendid armies and centralized despotic power, could not disdain the royal statesman and soldier who stood at the head of the Maritime Powers, and spoke on many issues in the name of the larger part of Europe. Nicely chosen terms of honour were interchanged between them. William expressed his "veneration and admiration" for Louis, and Louis his "high respect" for William. "He [William] may nevertheless rest assured," the French King had written at the outset of the peace negotiations,

> that I could not see him at the head of so powerful a League as that which has been formed against me, without having that esteem for him which the deference that the principal Powers of Europe have for his opinion seems to demand; and that even his perseverance in the alliances contrary to my interests, gives me reason to believe that those which the good of Europe now requires me to contract with him will be equally durable.[1]

Both potentates yielded themselves for a space to the sensation that together with goodwill they could settle the problems of Europe and give repose to Christendom. Splendid embassages made their reciprocal entries with pomp and glitter into the two capitals. The style and magnificence of Portland's arrival in Paris was matched by that of the French Ambassador, the Comte de Tallard, at the Court of St James's. Tallard commands a special interest in our story. He, like Villars, was one of those soldier-diplomatists whom France has several times used in her great periods of power. His military reputation stood high. Saint-Simon thought him a contemptible diplomatist; but he certainly possessed a keen intelligence and an exceptional knowledge of affairs. His letters and reports to the French Government, like those of Courtin and Barillon under Charles II and James II, now open again to us that window upon the past which William's wars had closed.

Three great international settlements were sought by William in harmony with Louis. The first of these was the Treaty of Carlowitz, negotiated in 1699 by English mediation and impulsion between the Holy Roman Empire and the Sublime Porte. Here for the first time the plenipotentiaries of many European states held united parley with the Turk. The removal, at least for a time, of the deadly

[1] Louis XIV to Boufflers, July 12, 1697; P. Grimblot, *Letters of William III and Louis XIV*, i, 20.

menace to Vienna revived the strength of the Empire and notably restored the balance of Europe. In the north a dangerous dispute between Denmark and Holstein, threatening to involve the greatest Powers, was laid to rest in 1700 by the Treaty of Travendahl. In this again William, using, with French acquiescence, the Dutch fleet to carry Charles XII of Sweden into Denmark, played a decisive part. Both these instruments augmented the fame and authority of King William, and placed him in a position of advantage to negotiate in the deepest secrecy with Louis upon the gravest matter of all—the destiny of the Spanish Empire when its monarch, whose death was always likely or imminent, should expire. It will be more convenient to the reader if we reserve the discussion of this First Partition Treaty for a later chapter.

Although the Peace of Ryswick had left the power of France intact, it marked the most solid check that Louis had yet sustained. William was now at the height of his glory. He seemed about to outshine even the Sun King himself. In the east, in the north, and now in the south and west of Europe he seemed about to lay, after generations of religious, dynastic, and territorial wars, the foundations of a lasting peace for the whole world. But at this very moment when all that the hearts of men desired was coming within their reach through his exertions, he was woefully and even fatally weakened by the action of the House of Commons. To deal with Louis XIV as an equal—the only key to safety—it was imperative that he should be strong. Not only must he marshal all his influence in Europe, not only must he wield the overwhelming sea-power of England and Holland, but he must have at his back a considerable British Army.

Very different were the mood and outlook of the Tory country gentlemen and Whig doctrinaires who assembled at Westminster. The wars were over; their repressions were at an end. They rejoiced in peace and clamoured for freedom. The dangers were past; why should they ever return? Groaning under taxation, impatient of every restraint, the Commons plunged into a career of economy, disarmament, and constitutional assertiveness which was speedily followed by the greatest of the wars England had ever waged and the heaviest expenditure she had ever borne. This phase has often recurred in our history. In fact, it has been an invariable rule that England, so steadfast in war, so indomitable in peril, should at the moment when the dire pressures are relaxed and victory has been won cast away its fruits. Having made every sacrifice, having

performed prodigies of strength and valour, our countrymen under every franchise or party have always fallen upon the ground in weakness and futility when a very little more perseverance would have made them supreme, or at least secure. Now after Ryswick, as at Utrecht, as at Paris in 1763, as after the Napoleonic wars and Waterloo, and as after Armageddon, the island mainspring of the life and peace of Europe broke; and England, amid a babel of voices, dissolved in faction, disbanded her armies, and sought to repay the spites and hardships of war-time upon the men who had carried her through.

She was, indeed, though she could not know it, in an interval between two deadly wars. The conflict of Tories and Whigs raged at a furious height; and to this bitter feud was added the burning constitutional issue in which both parties co-operated, and from which the modern polity of England was to emerge. Beyond all was the national danger by which, late but surely, all other passions would be over-ridden. There were therefore three separate tensions, each simultaneously reacting upon the other.

England came out of the war with an army of eighty-seven thousand regular soldiers. The King considered that thirty thousand men and a large additional number of officers was the least that would guarantee the public safety and interest. His Ministers, in contact with Parliament, did not dare propose more than ten thousand, and the House of Commons would only vote seven thousand. Sunderland, with his record, felt himself in no condition to face such a storm. He had ventured to emerge into open power as Lord Chamberlain. He deemed it expedient to retire again behind the scenes; and the King could not persuade him to remain. He understood the forces at work better than his master. The Navy underwent a less severe compression. The picture is complicated by a considerable garrison which all admitted must be kept in Ireland, by two thousand men in the West Indies, and by three thousand marines borne as sailors, though actually infantry. A new Parliament only reiterated more stridently the demands of its predecessor. Its Members had vowed on the hustings that they would cut the expenses to the bone and break up the standing army. They ingeminated economy. The reductions were carried out in the most brutal manner, the war-bitten veterans and the Huguenot refugees who had fought so well being summarily flung on the streets and treated as rogues and vagabonds on the first provocation. The

process was only tempered by the half-pay granted to the officers as a retaining fee, and delayed by the inability of Parliament to pay the arrears due to the men before discharge. An orgy of insult and abuse in which all classes of the civil population heartily joined began around all uniformed men, the half-pay officers, and especially those who had already been disarmed and turned adrift and had no means of support. The roads and countryside became infested with desperate, starving footpads who had lately grappled with the French Guard and shed their blood for King and country. The days of Robin Hood returned, and what was left of the English cavalry was largely occupied in hunting down their old comrades-in-arms now driven into outlawry. The gibbet and the lash were meted out with ruthless vigour on all who fell into the clutches of the law. Such was the process of demobilization in the seventeenth century.

A new and in many ways a singularly modern figure whom every one nowadays can understand had appeared in the House of Commons.[1] Robert Harley was born and bred in a Puritan family and atmosphere a Whig and a Dissenter. He was educated for the Bar, though never called to it. Elected for the borough of New Radnor in 1690, he speedily became a master of Parliamentary tactics and procedure. He understood, we are assured, the art of 'lengthening out' the debates, of 'perplexing' the issues, and of taking up and exploiting popular cries. In the process of opposing the Court he gradually transformed himself from Whig to Tory and from Dissenter to High Churchman, so that eventually he became the chief of the Tories both in Church and State. Already in 1698 he had become virtually their leader in the House of Commons. He it was who conducted the reckless movement for the reduction of the armed forces. He it was who sought to rival the Bank of England with the Land Bank. But although his speeches gave entire satisfaction to the vain crowd he led, he himself took longer views and dreamed of a day when he would play the game of politics on a stage more brightly lit than Westminster. He appealed to moderate opinion even when heading the attack. He kept in touch with the Whigs, while delighting the Tories. He made the Court feel that, though he was their most serious enemy, he might also some day, perhaps, become their best friend.

Behind Harley, Seymour, the pre-eminent 'sham good-fellow' of the age, cheered on his West Country pack with all the zest of a huntsman on a good scenting day. The Tory squires roared about

[1] *Cf.* E. S. Roscoe, *Robert Harley* (1902); Burnet, iv, 197.

the expense of useless and insolent popinjays; and the Whigs joined them in descanting upon the menace to freedom inherent in a standing army. The King was aghast at these furious manifestations. His heart bled for the officers and men with whom he had marched and fought during the long, sombre campaigns. Every fibre in his nature revolted at the baseness, cruelty, and ingratitude with which his faithful troops were treated, and at the same time he felt his whole European position undermined by the blotting out of England as a military factor. But he was powerless. Moreover, it was resolved that such troops as must perforce be retained should not comprise a single foreigner. The Dutch Guards must forthwith quit the island. Accordingly this well-trained, devoted brigade began its march to the coast. The Commons rejected the King's final appeal for their retention, though he wrote his message throughout in his own hand. When in his Speeches from the Throne he suggested that the country was being endangered, haughty demands were made in the Commons for the names of the Ministers who had dared to counsel him to address them in such terms.

Can we wonder that the unhappy prince, insulted in the hour of his greatest triumph, hamstrung in the full stride of his most beneficent activity, outraged in his honour and comradeship as a soldier, wished to quit the insensate and ungrateful people whose religion, whose institutions he had preserved, and whose fame he had lifted so high? He would abandon the odious and intractable race. He would retort their hatred of foreigners with a gesture of inexpressible scorn. Europe might clatter again into confusion so that insular ignorance should reap its harvest. That he mastered these emotions is a measure of his quality. It was the hardest of his victories, and without it his life's work must have perished. Yet if we reflect on his many faults in tact, in conduct, and in fairness in the earlier days of his reign, the unwarrantable favours he had lavished on his Dutchmen, the injustices done to English commanders, Count Solms's maltreatment of the English troops at Steinkirk, his uncomprehending distaste for the people of his new realm, their relegation to be mere pawns on his Continental chess-board—anyone can feel that all the blame was not on one side. His present anguish paid his debts of former years. As for the English, they were only too soon to redeem their follies in blood and toil.

Few features in Marlborough's long life are more remarkable than the manner in which he steadily grew in weight and influence

through the whole of the six years when he was banished from favour and office The Whigs were jealous of Shrewsbury's honour, and the Tories felt a strong interest in Godolphin. But Marlborough had no party to take care of him, and he alone bore the weight of the royal displeasure. He took a regular share in the business of the House of Lords. Apart from the attainting of Fenwick, he preserved a conciliatory attitude towards the Jacobites. He remained the trusted friend of the Princess Anne. For the rest he lived in tranquil retirement, seeming not to fret at the great war-opportunities which were slipping away, or at the years of his prime which were being consumed. He was happy with Sarah and his children, and his equanimity was perfect. He rarely wrote letters, except to Sarah when he was parted from her, or on public business when he was employed. We have, therefore, only the scantiest records of his daily life during these years or of his public actions. Still he grew, and at the end of this lengthy period of eclipse was felt by every one around the summit of affairs to be one of the greatest Englishmen of the day.

William was very slow in resuming relations with him. After the death of Queen Mary in 1694 he had been readmitted to the Court, but to no employment. At last, however, the barrier fell to pieces. Anne's eldest son, the Duke of Gloucester, was now nine years old. It was thought fitting to provide the future heir-apparent to the Crown with a governor of high consequence and an establishment of his own. Parliament in voting the King a Civil List of £700,000 a year had foreseen such an arrangement. William's first thoughts turned to Shrewsbury, who was still brooding in the country and constantly asking to be relieved of his office. He had, as we have seen, more than once pressed Marlborough's claims upon the King. He now declined the appointment for which his friend seemed the obvious choice. Nothing could be more agreeable to the young Prince's parents. Still the King hesitated, and a current of Tory opinion brought Rochester's name forward. Sunderland seems to have exerted his still potent influence in Marlborough's favour.

It may well have been, however, that a new associate of Marlborough's carried the greatest weight. William had become deeply attached to the young Dutch courtier Keppel. He had advanced him in a few years from being a page to a commanding position in the State. He had newly created him Earl of Albemarle. There was an affinity between them—honourable, but subtle and unusual. The lonely, childless monarch treated Keppel as if he were a well-

beloved adopted son. The King's old faithful intimate, Portland, had long been Marlborough's enemy. He had not perhaps forgotten a description of him as "a wooden fellow." But Portland was now on his embassy in Paris, and Keppel had supplanted him in the King's heart. The rivalry between these two Dutchmen was hot. In fact, Portland was soon to cast off all his offices for a ludicrous cause. Keppel in his absence abroad had installed himself at Newmarket in the rooms next to the royal apartments which Portland had long occupied; and William would not eject him. It sufficed that Portland was Marlborough's enemy for Keppel to become his advocate. Thus those obstacles against which merit and policy had so long pressed in vain were smoothly removed by the deft and tactful addresses of a youthful counsellor.

In the summer of 1698 William invited Marlborough to be governor of the boy Prince. When he kissed hands upon his appointment William uttered the gracious but discriminating words, "My lord, teach him but to know [? be] what you are, and my nephew cannot want for accomplishments."[1] At the same time Marlborough was restored to his rank in the Army and to the Privy Council. The King announced his decision in remarkable terms in the *Gazette* of June 16, 1698:

> His Majesty has been pleased to appoint the Right Honourable the Earl of Marlborough to be Governor of His Highness the Duke of Gloucester, as a mark of the good opinion His Majesty has of his lordship's zeal for his service and his qualifications for the employment of so great a trust. . . .

The miniature Court of the Duke of Gloucester was formed with expedition in the summer of 1698.[2] His parents and the Marlboroughs had their own ideas about its composition. The King shied at their clear-cut plans. "The Princess Anne," he exclaimed petulantly, on the eve of sailing to The Hague, "should not be Queen before her time." Marlborough made no difficulties. He sought only to know the royal pleasure; and Keppel, who was inseparable from his master, promised to guide it into proper channels. In the end the list was accepted very much as it had been planned. William had chosen Bishop Burnet to be the young Prince's spiritual guide, and in addition to educate him in history,

[1] The sole authority for this remark is *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals.*

[2] See the "Establishment of the Duke of Gloucester's Family," August [?] 1697 [? 8], in *C.S.P.* (*Domestic*), 1696–97, p. 343; also two letters of Marlborough to Burnet in the Bodleian (Add. MSS., A. 291).

politics, and the lesser arts. A Tory governor must be balanced by a Whig preceptor. William may also have been glad to get Burnet, "the blabbing Bishop," of whom he was tired, out of his way. However, Marlborough and Burnet became close friends. The Bishop yielded himself to the charm and courtesy of his chief. He fell so much under his attraction that he even rewrote the passage in his history dealing with Churchill's desertion of James. Improvidently he forgot to destroy the original version, which has been unearthed to his posthumous mockery. Lord Churchill, Marlborough's only surviving son, aged twelve, was appointed Master of the Horse and no doubt 'playmate in chief.' A son of Bishop Burnet became a page, and an impoverished gentlewoman named Hill was put in charge of the laundry.

Among fleeting shadows the name of Hill is significant. In 1689, shortly after the Revolution, Sarah discovered that she had poor relations. Her grandfather, Sir John Jennings, had produced no fewer than twenty-two children. His estate, though substantial, could not bear such subdivision. One of his daughters, with hardly £500 for her dowry, had married a Levant merchant named Hill. Having prospered for some years, he was ultimately ruined by speculation, or what Sarah called "turning projector." "But as this was long before I was born," writes Sarah in a passage of perfect literary malice, all the more piquant because published in the lifetime of many of those to whom it refers,

> I never knew there were such people in the world, till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cockpit; at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me and said, she believed I did not know that I had relations who were in want, and she gave me an account of them. When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never heard before of any such relations, and immediately gave her out of my purse ten guineas for their present relief, saying, I would do what I could for them. Afterwards I sent Mrs Hill more money, and saw her. She told me that her husband was in the same relation to Mr Harley, as she was to me,[1] but that he had never done any thing for her.[2]

When Mr and Mrs Hill died they left four children, two sons and two daughters.

> The elder daughter [Abigail] . . . was a grown woman. I took her to St Albans, where she lived with me and my children, and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister. . . . As for

[1] *I.e.*, uncle and aunt.

[2] *Conduct*, pp. 177–181.

the younger daughter (who is still living) I engaged my Lord Marlborough, when the Duke of Gloucester's family was settled, to make her laundress to him, which was a good provision for her. And when the Duke of Gloucester died, I obtained for her a pension of £200 a year, which I paid her out of the Privy Purse. . . . The Queen was pleased to allow the money for that purchase [an annuity] and it is very probable that Mrs Hill has the annuity to this day, and perhaps nothing else, unless she saved money after her sister had made her Deputy to the Privy Purse, which she did as soon as she had supplanted me.

The elder son was at my request put by my Lord Godolphin into a place in the custom-house; and when, in order to his advancement to a better, it was necessary to give security for his good behaviour, I got a relation of the Duke of Marlborough's to be bound for him in two thousand pounds.

His brother (whom the bottle-men afterwards called "honest Jack Hill") was a tall boy whom I clothed (for he was all in rags) and put to school at St Albans. . . . After he had learnt what he could there, a vacancy happening of Page of Honour to the Prince of Denmark, his Highness was pleased at my request to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester. And though my Lord always said that Jack Hill was good for nothing, yet to oblige me he made him his aide-de-camp and afterwards gave him a regiment. But it was his sister's interest that raised him to be a General and to command in that ever memorable expedition to Quebec; I had no share in doing him these honours. To finish what I have to say upon this subject:—when Mr Harley thought it useful to attack the Duke of Marlborough in Parliament, this Quebec General, this honest Jack Hill, this once ragged boy whom I clothed, happening to be sick in bed, was nevertheless persuaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself in warmer clothes than those I had given him, and go to the House to vote against the Duke.

Here, then, is a succinct account of the Abigail Hill who afterwards, as Mrs Masham and Harley's confidante, saved France from destruction as surely, though scarcely as gloriously, as Joan of Arc. It was an annoyance of peculiar rankle to Sarah to the end of her long life that she, by indulging her most generous sentiments of compassion, should have prepared her own undoing and her husband's fall at the moment when the consummation of all his victories and toils seemed so near. In her strong, domineering, bustling life Sarah did many actions both bad and good, but her charity to the Hills was her special benevolence. She was, indeed for many years their patron saint. Nepotism apart, her kindliness

to them shines brightly. Yet this was one of the traceable causes of her catastrophe.

Thus we see Marlborough picking his steps warily and with foresight through all the perplexities and hazards of the times, while at the same time his devoted wife by one of the best deeds in her life sets in train, all unwitting, the series of events which amid his glories shall lay him low.

> The young disease, that must subdue at length,
> Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.

It is a classic instance of how far romance lags behind reality.

Chapter Thirty

MARLBOROUGH IN POLITICS

1698–1700

MEANWHILE Marlborough's family had grown up, and in the years 1698 and 1699 his two eldest daughters both married. The eldest, Henrietta, became engaged to Francis, Lord Godolphin's son. The lifelong friendship between both the Marlboroughs and Godolphin is a factor in history; but this was no marriage of political or worldly calculation. It was a love-match between very young people—Francis was only twenty and Henrietta eighteen—who were thrown together by the intimacies of their parents, to whom it gave the keenest pleasure. Godolphin's wife had died after giving birth to Francis a generation earlier. The Treasurer was too deeply attached to her memory ever to marry again. He lived for his work, his sport, and his only child, a graceful youth of more charm than force. In that corrupt age, when public office was almost the only road to riches, Godolphin was for more than thirty years and in four reigns in control of the national finances. He was, however, a man of stainless integrity in money matters. At his death in 1712 he left but £14,000, somewhat less than what he had inherited forty years before. He could therefore at this time give only the smallest competence to his son. But the fabulous avarice of John and Sarah seems to have slumbered on this occasion, as it had when they themselves plighted their penniless troth. Marlborough's notorious greed for lucre had so far left him at forty-five the poorest of his rank. Nevertheless he provided a dowry of £5000. The Princess Anne, whose enthusiasm was kindled by this cementing of friendship in her circle, wished to bestow £10,000 upon the young couple. But the Marlboroughs, no doubt from some base motive, would only accept £5000. The marriage took place on March 24, 1698. The bride was beautiful and accomplished. Her graces were the theme for the rhymesters of the day. The union was lasting.

The marriage of Marlborough's second daughter, Anne, in January 1700, was an event of great importance. We have seen how

long and varied had been the relations of Marlborough and Sunderland and the political association that had always subsisted between them. A close friendship had grown between their wives. Indeed, there is a letter of Princess Anne's to Sarah which shows that her jealousy was playfully excited by their intimacy.

> I cannot help envying Lady Sunderland to-day that she should have the satisfaction of seeing you before me, for I am sure she cannot love you half so well as I do, though I know that she has the art of saying a great deal.

Sunderland's heir, Lord Spencer, who was a widower, was a remarkable personality. He had none of the insinuating charm and genial courtesy of his incomprehensible father. He was an ultra-Whig of the straitest and most unbending type. He did not trouble to conceal his republican opinions. He was so conscious of the rights of his order and of Parliament against the Crown that he had little sympathy left for the commonalty. According to his philosophy, citizens of the worst republic were free, while subjects of the best king were slaves. He was a keen book-lover, and the Sunderland Library remained for many generations his monument. The Whig Party took a lively interest in the development of his mind. It was thought that experience would mellow his orthodox severity, and they already saluted him as the future champion of the cause for which "Hampden had died in the field and Sidney on the scaffold."

Sarah, that sturdy Whig, may have shared these hopes; but Marlborough's temperamental Toryism was repulsed by the harshness alike of Lord Spencer's doctrine and disposition. Anne was his favourite daughter, and by every account was a brilliant and fascinating creature. Intimate and subtle as were his relations with Sunderland in State affairs, important as were the reciprocal services which might be rendered, magnificent as was the inheritance, he was disinclined to mingle that wayward blood with his own, or to countenance a marriage which might not bring his daughter happiness. He was therefore very hard to persuade. However, he gradually yielded to Sarah's persuasions, and, being at length convinced of Lord Spencer's sincerity, he finally consented. Once again Princess Anne, who was the girl's godmother, matched the family dowry with a gift of £5000. Sunderland, who seems to have longed for the marriage, wrote in a remarkable letter:

> If I see him so settled I shall desire nothing more in this world but to die in peace if it please God. I must add this that if he can be thus

> happy he will be governed in everything public and private by my lord Marlborough. I have particularly talked to him of that and he is sensible how advantageous it will be to him to be so. I need not I am sure desire that all this may be a secret to everybody but Lady Marlborough.[1]

These expectations were not fulfilled, and Spencer's personality and conduct were to become after his father's death a cause of serious political embarrassment. It is, however, by this marriage that the Marlborough blood, titles, and estates have descended to posterity, for his only surviving son, Lord Churchill, Master of the Horse in the Duke of Gloucester's household, had almost as short a span to live as the little Prince he served.

With the coming of peace, many Englishmen of quality visited Paris, and contact with the Jacobite Court was frequent and open. According to the Nairne Papers, Marlborough was still expressing to the Jacobite agents his willingness to restore James II.[2] Nothing is more inherently improbable. Nothing was more contrary to his interests. On the other hand, the real character of his connexion with Saint-Germains at this time was far more obvious and natural. After her husband's death in 1693 the Duchess of Tyrconnel, the once radiant Frances, had secured a small pension from the French Government, and passed her time either in France or in Flanders. But her heart was turned towards her native land. We find the Marlboroughs using their influence with the English Ministers to obtain permission for her return to Ireland. James Brydges, son of Lord Chandos and later Paymaster-General of the Forces, notes in his journal in May 1701 how "Lord and Lady Marlborough came to see me and left Lady Tyrconnell's petition."[3] They do not seem to have been successful, for it was not till 1707 or 1708 that she took up her abode in Dublin, where she founded a nunnery for "poor Clares" and lived to the verge of ninety.

There is a letter of Sarah's written to one of her uncles which discloses a minor intrigue, and also shows that feminine sentiment towards Customs regulations was much the same then as now:

> I have sent you three dozen and three pairs of gloves, which I desire you will try to get the gentleman you said was going to France to carry with him. He will find no difficulty at the customs house here if his

[1] Lord Sunderland to Mrs Boscawen, December 31, 1698, Blenheim MSS.
[2] Macpherson, i, 588.
[3] Brydges' Journal, May 12, 1701, Huntington Library MSS.

> things are to be seen; but in France those sort of things are forbid, and therefore I trouble you with them, because I can't send them as one does other goods that one may have in that country for paying for, but I conclude they are not so exact, but that a gentleman may carry any thing of that nature and they won't dispute it. They must be given to Madam Dumene, without naming my sister at all, and if it be as easy to you I believe it will be best not to name me to the gentleman you give 'em to, who I conclude you know enough to ask such a favour from, but if he won't undertake it I desire you would be pleased to let the gloves be sent again to my porter at St James's and I must try to find some other opportunity of sending them.

The ice of a long frost being broken, the King felt the comfort in his many troubles of Marlborough's serene, practical, adaptive personality, which no difficulties found without resource, which no dangers disturbed. In July 1698, when the royal departure for Holland rendered a Council of Regency necessary, Marlborough was nominated one of the nine Lords Justices to exercise the sovereign power. From this time forth William seemed to turn increasingly, if without personal friendship, towards the man of whose aid he had deprived himself during the most critical years of his reign. He used in peace the soldier he had neglected in war; and Marlborough, though his prime bent was military, though stamped from his youth with the profession of arms, became in the closing years of the reign a shrewd and powerful politician.

This new relationship of William and Marlborough requires close examination. The King seemed speedily inclined to trust him implicitly and to make common cause with him in great matters. We have Somers' letter of December 29, 1698, to prove that in his grief and wrath upon the dismissal of the Dutch Guards he confided to Marlborough, although he was not in the Cabinet, his secret resolve, withheld from some of his Ministers, to abdicate the crown. "He has spoken of it to my Lord Marlborough (which one would wonder at almost as much as at ye thing itself), to Mr Montague, and to my Lord Orford, and, I believe to divers others."[1]

We have no record of what Marlborough advised; but there can be little doubt he urged the King to abandon his design. William's abdication at such a juncture might as easily have been followed by a republic as by the accession of the Princess Anne. There was as yet no Act of Settlement. Parliament in its queer temper would have had no mind to exchange the direct rule of

[1] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 573.

William for the indirect rule of Marlborough, a subject exposed to every jealousy. Only a normal succession upon a demise of the Crown could bring him power in a form worth having. He must surely have counselled upon the King the patience he practised himself. His comprehension of Europe at this time was second only to that of William. They both viewed its complex scene from the same angle. They assigned similar values to its numerous factors. They both sought the same curbing of France through a European coalition animated and headed by the Maritime Powers. Marlborough saw the rashness and peril of English disarmament at such a juncture as clearly as the King, though he had none of those recent personal ties with the disbanded regiments, threatened Dutch Guards, and ill-treated Huguenot officers which made the process so poignant to his master. Lastly, both regarded with much detachment, both viewed with a distaste which it was politic to conceal, the violent passions and prejudices of the English political parties, and both were prone to use them alternately for their own purposes, which included also the greatest purposes of the age. Thus for the next two years, if he did not wholly trust Marlborough, William leaned on him. Marlborough felt the weight, and understood and discounted the cause. He did not give himself wholly to the King. The royal confidence was only half-confidence: the rest was the need of help. Hence he preserved his independence and carefully guarded the sources of his own personal power.

Lord Wolseley has not comprehended Marlborough's conduct during the closing years of William III. He is shocked to find his hero, although employed by the King in many great matters while war drew nearer, voting on all test party issues with the Tories in their savage faction fight. He wishes that he had cut himself adrift from narrow political associations and stood forth boldly at William's side proclaiming the oncoming peril and urging all true Englishmen to unite together. He describes his course as "inexplicable" except on grounds of partisanship, and inexcusable in one who had so clear a view of Europe. In fact, however, the forces by which Marlborough was swayed and which he used are easy to discern.

If Marlborough had cut himself adrift from the Tory Party and become a mere adherent of the Court he would soon have lost all influence upon events. His own power would have been reduced to his own personal ability, while at the same time his usefulness to the King would have vanished. William knew England almost as well as he knew Europe, but he despised the ignoble strife of its

parties, and underrated the factor of party as an element in his vast problem. In his embarrassments he would turn from Whig Ministers who could not manage and would not face the House of Commons to the turbulent Tories, only to find them ignorant of world facts and with a view of national interests which was at that time wrong-headed and utterly at variance with his own purposes. The Whigs at least saw what was coming, and would help him to meet it. Marlborough, who understood the public interest as clearly as his own, knew that the Whigs could never carry England through the approaching ordeal in the teeth of Tory opposition: he knew that the Tories were by far the strongest faction in the State. Except in the most general way he did not share their prejudices, but he knew their power and that the credit he had with them was one of the main foundations of his own position. He stood with Rochester and Godolphin midway between the King and the Tory Parliament. Of these three he alone shared William's European view; but his influence with Rochester was considerable, and with Godolphin paramount. They all toed the party line and voted the party ticket as much as was necessary to identify themselves markedly with Toryism. At the same time, animated by Marlborough, they laboured to draw their party to the King's view of the national interest and to draw the King to further reliance on the Tories, including themselves. Marlborough was in close friendly relations with Harley, and through him with the House of Commons. He wielded himself great influence in the House of Lords. Through Sunderland, now linked to him by the marriage of their children, and through Sarah, he was in contact with the Whigs. And always he stood by the Princess Anne, dominated and inspired her circle, and championed her interests, in which also the future lay.

These incomplete relationships were the King's own fault, and a misfortune to his reign. If in 1689 and 1690 William, with two kingdoms to govern and the diplomacy of half Europe in his hands, had treated Marlborough fairly and had not denied him his rightful opportunity upon the battlefields, he might have found that talisman of victory without which all his painstaking, adroit combinations and noble exertions could but achieve a mediocre result. He might have found across the differences of rank that same comradeship, never disturbed by doubt or jealousy, true to the supreme tests of war and fortune, which later shone between Marlborough and Eugene.

Two questions of domestic politics arose which illustrate Marlborough's independence of the Court. In 1689 the King, no doubt with Marlborough's aid, had persuaded Prince George of Denmark to give up, as a counter in a treaty of peace between Denmark and Sweden, his small hereditary lands in Denmark for a mortgage of £85,000. The general war being over, the time had now come to redeem this mortgage. The King, who had hitherto paid Prince George 6 per cent. upon the capital, was loath to disclose the transaction to Parliament. He knew it would raise a storm in the Commons, then in full economy cry. But Prince George insisted, and his rights were indisputable. It was only after extremely disagreeable debates, in which all Marlborough's influence was exerted first to have the matter brought forward and thereafter to have the claim settled, that the money was voted. Here was another evidence as plain as the dispute about the Princess Anne's grant, eight years earlier, that the Marlboroughs would not hesitate, if forced to the choice, to champion their old patrons against the King.

The second case raised wider issues. At the end of the Irish war enormous rebel estates had been forfeited to the Crown. At intervals during his reign William had bestowed them upon his Dutch and Huguenot generals and companions. Bentinck, Ginkel, Ruvigny, Zulestein, all now ennobled, had gained an immense spoil. The King had gone farther. He had rewarded mere favourites like young Keppel and his own mistress, Elizabeth Villiers, from the same source. It was computed, or at least alleged, that after much had been restored to pardoned rebels Crown lands worth one and a half millions had been distributed to private persons.

The King asserted his right in terms revived from the Plantagenets. The Commons dwelt upon the expense of the war, the public debt, and the calamitous taxes. They reclaimed on behalf of the nation all these granted Irish lands, and particularly those held by foreigners. They had not been able fully to disband the Army because they could not find the money to pay off the men. Here in these royal grants was the means. They would achieve a purpose odious to the King by a method more odious still, and by the repudiation of his bounty furnish the funds to deprive him of his Army. The conflict between a resolute House of Commons, conscious of its ever-growing power, and William's embarrassed, half-hearted Ministers could have but one ending. It was thought prudent that the intervention of the Lords upon the side of the Prerogative should not be pressed. Sunderland, still active and emollient behind

the scenes, counselled submission. The title-deeds granted by the King were torn up, and all the captured lands were wrested from their new owners.

This controversy grievously embarrassed Marlborough. He had established dignified and self-respecting relations with the King. His influence with both Houses of Parliament was weighty. His character as a general officer seemed about to be merged in a political career. His appointment as a Minister was much rumoured. In February 1699 Vernon wrote to Shrewsbury:

> Sir John Forbes tells me that he hears an exchange is negotiating, that Lord Marlborough should be Chamberlain and you Governor to the Duke of Gloucester [Shrewsbury had by now become Lord Chamberlain], but I hear nothing of it otherwise; but I observe Lord Marlborough is frequently with the King and therefore I hope they are well together.[1]

Nothing came of this, but his posts as governor to the Duke of Gloucester and upon the Council of Regency were equal to high Court or Cabinet rank. He could almost certainly have had Ministerial office himself, and perhaps, indeed, declined it. There is a letter from him to Shrewsbury of June 3, 1699, in which he says, "You will see the little encouragement there is to meddle with anything, whilst so much jealousy reigns."[2]

The Bill for the resumption of the Irish lands forced him into a new antagonism with the King. Although his sister Arabella benefited by them, he had always disapproved of these grants, and no doubt his opinions were upon record. He therefore moved forward with the Tory Party. We do not know how far he went; but one rare gleam of light shows the King and Marlborough in open tug-of-war. Lord Lonsdale, Lord Privy Seal, was conducting the opposition to the Bill in the Commons. "I have just learned," wrote William to Bentinck (April 5, 1700),

> from Dr Radcliffe, whom my Lord P. Seal has sent for, that he is extremely ill, which is at this moment a terrible contretemps. I fear he has "du spleene masle" [!]. If you can see him before you go to the House, encourage him to continue with firmness what he has so well begun. I did so myself yesterday evening; but Milord Marlborough who dogs his footsteps [*qui ne le quitte pas d'un pas*] certainly intimidates him. If the Bill does not now fall in your House, I count all lost.[3]

[1] Wolseley (ii, 328) misreads "then" for "you" and misdates this letter 1698.

[2] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 622.

[3] *Correspondence of William III and Portland* (Royal Dutch Historical Society, 1927), No. 23, letter 273.

The unfortunate Privy Seal died of his illness later in the year.

The course Marlborough adopted gave dissatisfaction to both sides. "The feelings of the King," writes Archdeacon Coxe,[1] "were too much wounded to regard with indulgence anyone who had favoured the obnoxious Bill; while the victorious party stigmatized all who had not fully entered into their measures, as enemies to the country." In January 1700 Vernon had written to Shrewsbury, "I think the cloud which has been hanging over my Lord Marlborough [about the Prince of Denmark's mortgage] is clearing up." But the new dispute darkened the sky again. In May we have a letter of Marlborough's to Shrewsbury:

> The King's coldness to me still continues, so that I should have been glad to have had your friendly advice; for to have friends and acquaintance unreasonably jealous, and the King at the same time angry, is what I know not how to bear; nor do I know how to behave myself.[2]

On the other hand, he supported the King in his efforts to prevent the undue reduction of the Army; and, in fact, led the House of Lords in this direction. Generally his relations with the King were such that William thought it right to reappoint him to the Council of Regency on his departure for Holland.

It is plain that the Tory Party, in spite of their narrowness and violence, represented the nation in their pressure for peace, retrenchment, and reform of abuses. Now that the war was over, the curious criss-cross structure of English politics defined itself. The Tories, venerating the Monarchy, accepted an alien King only to bully him. The Whigs cherished their imported sovereign because he could ill defend his Prerogative. Thus, sharply as the factions were divided, the Tories could always count upon important Whig support whenever any difference with the King on current administration rose to the height of a constitutional issue. The war had held these forces in suspension. But the first three years of peace reduced King William to a pitiful plight. The self-sufficiency of the House of Commons knew no bounds. Sagacious in all that fell within their sphere of domestic knowledge, they were ignorant or disdainful of the world issues which were shortly to invade their affairs. Although the monarchical principle still swayed the vast majority, England had never been nearer a republic since the Commonwealth. "The party leaders," observes Ranke, "felt themselves stronger than the King." "The Royal authority," wrote a French agent in

[1] Coxe, i, 102. Coxe quotes several letters of Vernon to Shrewsbury which are as yet unpublished.

[2] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 647.

1701, "is so enfeebled that England cannot but be regarded as a Republic, and her king as an officer authorized to carry out what Parliament has ordered in the intervals between its sessions."[1]

These conditions which now manifested themselves so powerfully were long to prevail. The natural desire of sovereigns to govern, apart from party, with those whom they thought the best men, was for more than two hundred years to be forbidden. The party system was entering into its long supremacy. The overpowering victories of Marlborough under Queen Anne, the famous Administration of Chatham, or the supreme emergencies of the twentieth century might suspend the operation of this custom; but in general and for nine-tenths of the time the Crown would be forced to subsist upon the alternation and interplay of opposing bands struggling for office, and for the assertion of their special loyalties, doctrines, and vested interests. It is astonishing that such a system should, on the whole, have proved so serviceable.

A tragical event supervened. The little Duke of Gloucester was now eleven. We can reproduce a picture of him in some detail from a contemporary tract written by one of his attendants named Jenkin Lewis.[2] In infancy he suffered from water on the brain: two attendants had to carry him everywhere. His mother did everything possible by doctors and changes of scene to improve his health; his father tried beating him to make him normal. Apparently this was beneficial, for he was soon reprimanded for using mild swear-words. Above all the child loved playing with toy cannon, toy ships, and toy soldiers. Beyond this he formed an army of playmates, who staged miniature wars and battles. One of his most promising lieutenants was Marlborough's son. Says Lewis:

> We every night had the ceremony of beating up the Tatta-ta-too, and the Word, and the Patrole, as in *garrison*; which latter was sometimes an excellent piece of diversion. My Lord Churchill was a bold-spirited youth, and not above two or three years older than the Duke, when he was admitted by him a Lieutenant-General. Mrs Atkinson [one of the governesses] invited Lady Hariote and Lady Anne Churchill one day to dine with her, in her chamber, and spend the day. Lord

[1] *Cf.* "Mémoire pour M. Poussin," April 15, 1701, in P.R.O. transcripts.

[2] Miss Strickland (*Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. xi) calls the author Lewis Jenkins. Actually he was Jenkin Lewis, a Welsh equerry in attendance on the Duke of Gloucester. It may be that this error in Miss Strickland's references has concealed his tract from the vigilance of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the standard bibliographies.

Churchill came with them. Mrs Wanley [another governess?] asked his Lordship, if he would go with the Duke? who answered briskly "Yes, I will!"—"What if you are killed?" said she. "I do not care!" which, the Duke hearing, took a secret delight in him from that moment. My Lord admired the Duke's Highland sword, which was readily bestowed on his Lordship by the Duke, although he was very fond of it, saying, he would bespeak another. Lady Anne Churchill, who was as sweet a creature as ever was seen, had a pretty case, containing a knife, fork, and spoon, which the Duke liked much, and asked what such a one would cost? She replied, with modesty, that she had won it at a lottery, but begged, if he liked it, that he would accept of it. He thanked her, and would with pleasure accept of it, if she would permit him to present her with something in return; which he afterwards remembered to do.

King William's interest in this child casts a pleasing light on his somewhat forbidding character. He saw and petted him repeatedly. At the time of the Fenwick trial, Gloucester, when but seven years old, caused one of his boy soldiers to write out the following address which he signed: "I, your Majesty's most dutiful subject, had rather lose my life in your majesty's cause than in any man's else, and I hope it will not be long ere you conquer France." To which his juvenile army and household appended, "We, your majesty's subjects, will stand by you while we have a drop of blood." In this same year he went with his mother to Tonbridge in order to study fortification "under the care of his clerical tutor." We may readily believe that with such propensities the young Prince rejoiced to have so martial a governor. It is, however, probable that Marlborough, far from encouraging this precocious militarism, inculcated habits of courtesy, gravity, and above all a judicious care of pounds, shillings, and pence.

The hearts of Englishmen and the eyes of Europe were turned towards this child. The Whigs drew from his games the hope of a sovereign who would make valiant head against France. The Tories, on the other hand, repeated with gusto some of his alleged disrespectful interruptions to Burnet's constitutional discourses. A warrior prince, an English prince, a prince with Plantagenet blood and the necessary Parliamentary education—a good match for any warming-pan impostor, however clad with Divine Right!

These hopes were blasted; other solutions awaited the problems of the English people. On July 30, 1700, the Duke of Gloucester died of smallpox so swiftly that his governor reached his bedside only as he breathed his last. His playmate Churchill survived but

three years, before he fell beneath the same fatal scourge. William wrote Marlborough a warm-hearted letter from Loo a few days later in which he expressed his surprise and grief at the little Duke's death. He added, "It is so great a loss to me, as well as to all England, that it pierces my heart with affliction." And he dispersed the household so promptly that Sarah had great difficulty in extracting their month's wages from the authorities of the Privy Purse.

Immense, far-reaching interests were opened by this new gap in the succession. Anne's health amid her repeated miscarriages and stillborn births was precarious. William's days were plainly drawing to a close. The crown of England, and with it not only all those issues of religion and Constitution which obsessed men's minds, but also the part which the British Isles would play in the destiny of Europe, was once again adrift on a dark, tempestuous ocean. There were many alternatives and many weighty objections to all of them. No one seems to have hankered for James II; but naturally many thoughts turned to the Prince of Wales. The warming-pan myth had lost its primal power. Why should he not be brought up under William's care in Holland? A Protestant, if possible; a Catholic, if it must be, but none the less with his constitutional duties engrained in him.

Historians have debated whether William did not at this time of amity with France dwell upon this solution. He certainly played with it. Had James II died one year earlier and the rightful heir been left alone, freed from the antagonisms which centred upon his father, our affairs might have decided themselves differently. And does not this fact, that even William balanced the issue of bringing back a prince from Saint-Germains, imply some rebuke upon those crude, superficial critics who have sought to brand as villainy all correspondence with the exiled Court? Then there were the children of Victor Amadeus of Savoy, who had married the daughter of Charles II's sister, the famous 'Minette.' But the house of Savoy was under a cloud. Its Duke had so recently deserted the Grand Alliance in the face of the enemy. Thirdly there were the rights of the house of Hanover, at this time represented by the aged Electress Sophia. This solution seemed likely to renew all the difficulties which had arisen in England through the importation of a foreign King. All monarchical sentiment longed for a prince of island character and English speech. But there was another sentiment which suddenly surged up stark and logical. Why should the nation be tormented by these riddles of a disputed succession? Why should not

William III be the last King in England? The expense of a Court was in those days sufficient to maintain powerful additions to the Navy or afford longed-for reliefs of taxation. The sudden advance of the republican idea made it imperative that a decision should be reached without delay. This mood dictated the Act of Settlement, and gave the crown to the house of Hanover in a statute which was virtually a reproach upon the reign of King William. The sovereign must be an Anglican—neither a Catholic nor a Calvinist. He must never leave the country without the permission of Parliament (as some had done so often). He must be advised not by any secret Cabinet or closet about his person, but by the Privy Council as a whole; and the Privy Council must be governed by the preponderating authority of an elected assembly wielding the money power. Thus the reign of Anne would be an interlude; and all would be in readiness at her death to give a dutiful and chilling reception to a Hanoverian prince.

We have no doubt where the Marlboroughs stood in these dominant matters. They must have been unswervingly hostile to any plan of the Prince of Wales intervening between Anne and her declared rights of succession. After Anne they felt themselves free to choose. It was unwise to peer too far ahead.

The untimely death of the Duke of Gloucester deprived Marlborough of his office; but he was by now so strongly established in the centre of English politics that, in spite of his recent difference with the King, his personal position was unimpaired.

These years had seen William helpless before the Tories. The Whigs, with whom he agreed on current issues, could not or would not carry the needful measures. Perhaps with responsibility and royal favour the Tories would abate their ire. The King had turned to them. The Whig Ministers dropped out one by one. Shrewsbury was at length allowed to depart for the Continent. Russell (Orford) had quitted the Admiralty. The brilliant Montagu, who had lost all his hold over the House of Commons, saw himself obliged to resign the Treasury. Somers, over-conscious of his virtues, hung on until he was dismissed. All these places were filled by Tories. Rochester re-entered the Cabinet; Godolphin resumed his long control of finance; and Marlborough, with a non-party outlook, a Whig foreign policy, and a rather faded Tory coat, was found moving sedately along the central line of impending national requirements. Yet this was due to neither oratory nor intrigue. It was not due to such backstairs influence as Sunderland so persis-

tently and often beneficially exercised; nor to the busy agitations and wire-pullings of a rising man like Harley, now become Speaker and accepted Tory leader in the House of Commons. It was mainly a weight acquired by personal ascendancy, fortified by continual buildings up and judicious withholdings.

In October 1700 Brydges, who had called upon him, noted down in his diary, "My Lord [Marlborough] told me, he believed the Parl: would not be dissolved, and that for Secretary of State the King had not disposed of it, not denying it might be given to himself."[1] A Dutch envoy reported home, "On dit toujours que le comte de Marlborough sera fait secrétaire d'état et le Lord Godolphin, premier commissaire de la trésorerie, mais ces deux icy ne sont pas encore declarez."[2] These anticipations were reduced to irrelevance by wider events.

[1] Brydges' Journal, October 31, 1700, Huntington Library MSS.

[2] L'Hermitage to the States-General, November 1/12, 1700 (Add. MSS., 17677 U.U., f. 324).

symptom of which report was carried to the Courts of Europe betokened the end. What then was to happen to half the world, and what would the other half do with it? A score of claimants, ranging from a successful usurper in Portugal to the Emperor Leopold, confident in his vague, but to his mind paramount, dynastic right, would come forward to demand a greater or lesser share of the mighty heritage. But could not William and Louis, incomparably the most skilled and experienced diplomatists in Europe, lords of the strongest armies and fleets in existence, both of whom saw and shrank from the danger of a renewal of the European conflict, devise some solution to which every candidate would be forced to bow?

The French historian Legrelle devotes a volume of five hundred pages to each of the two new Partition Treaties. We have no intention of being drawn beyond the briefest outline of what happened. England and Holland, who lived by seaborne trade and dreamed of colonies and wealth beyond the oceans, could not bear that the control of Spain, the Indies, Mexico, South America, and the Mediterranean should fall into the competent hands of France. They saw themselves shut out by prohibitive tariffs, mercantile laws, and indefinite naval expansion, alike from their daily bread and their future. The independence of Belgium from France was a vital interest which England and Holland shared in common. The Protestant states shivered at the prospect of the Government that had revoked the Edict of Nantes being united with the Government that had devised and enforced the Holy Inquisition. The Emperor, that Catholic despot without whose aid Protestantism and Parliamentary institutions would be imperilled, advanced proud and impracticable claims. Though the rights to the Spanish Empire which he possessed were legally inferior, it seemed necessary to support him at all costs against the possibility of unlimited French expansion. Unless a settlement could be reached between him and France there must be general war. The Imperial Court had long accustomed itself to a dynastic monopoly of the Spanish throne, and no settlement could be reached with France which did not injure and anger it. Still, if Louis and William could agree upon a settlement, they would together have the power to impose their will on all concerned.

The peace so earnestly desired could only take the form of a new partition of the Spanish Empire. Very secretly—breathing not a word to Spain nor to the Emperor—the two leading princes set about this task. There were three claimants, each of whom, as set

forth in the table at p. 454, could advance important pretensions. The first was France, represented either by the Dauphin or, if the two crowns could not be joined, by his second son, the Duke of Anjou. These rights rested upon the marriage of Louis XIV with the eldest Spanish princess. They were barred by a solemn renunciation at the time of Louis XIV's marriage with the then Infanta of Spain. But Cardinal Mazarin had woven the question of her dowry into the act of renunciation; and certainly the dowry had not been paid by Spain. Next there was the Emperor, who, as the widower of the younger Spanish princess, claimed as much as he could, but was willing to transfer his claims to the second son of his own second wife, the Archduke Charles. Thirdly there was the Emperor's grandson by his first marriage, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria. The essence of the new Partition Treaty of September 24, 1698, was to give the bulk of the Spanish Empire to the candidate who, if not strongest in right, was at least weakest in power. Louis and William both promised to recognize the Electoral Prince as heir to Charles II. The Dauphin was to receive Sicily, Naples, Finale, and certain other Italian territories. The Archduke Charles was to have the Milanese. The Maritime Powers represented by William had no claims at all; but they were assured of important trading rights beyond the oceans.

These distributions might be represented as an act of self-denial by France. In fact, however, her acquisitions in Italy were solid; they were to be obtained without further war, and the power of the Emperor received only a minimum augmentation. At least the balance of Europe was preserved. Moreover, when historians speak of Spain, the Indies, and the bulk of the Spanish Empire 'going to' the Electoral Prince, what they really mean is that the Electoral Prince would go to Madrid and would reign there as a Spanish sovereign. Very different would be the destination of the splendid Italian provinces. They 'went' to France, and through the Dauphin were directly incorporated in the dominions of Louis XIV. Still, we must regard this treaty as a real effort in the cause of peace. It could not long remain secret.

As soon as the Emperor learned its import he was infuriated. He refused to accede to the treaty; he declared himself basely deserted by his late allies. The repercussion upon Spain was not less decisive. Only one conviction dominated the Castilian aristocracy—the Spanish Empire must not be divided. It was intolerable to their patriotism—indeed, to their good sense—that the empire their

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

Philip III

Anne of Austria = *Louis XIII*

Philip IV

Maria = FERDINAND III

Louis XIV = Maria Theresa

Charles II "The Sufferer" *d.* 1700

Margaret = LEOPOLD I = A princess of Neuberg

d. 1705

Louis the Dauphin

Elector of Bavaria = Maria Antonia

JOSEPH I *d.* 1711

ARCHDUKE CHARLES The hope of the 1699 Partition Treaty. Candidate of the allies in the war. EMPEROR 1711

Louis, Duke of Burgundy

DUKE OF ANJOU who became **Philip V** King of Spain

ELECTORAL PRINCE JOSEPH FERDINAND The hope of the 1698 Partition Treaty *d.* 1699

Louis XV

KEY

MALES

Kings of France thus: *Louis XIII.*
Emperors thus: CHARLES II.
Kings of Spain thus: **Philip III.**
Candidates for the Spanish throne thus: **DUKE OF ANJOU.**

FEMALES

indicates full renunciation of Spanish throne.

„ conditional renunciation of Spanish throne.

„ private and invalid renunciation of Spanish throne.

„ no renunciation of Spanish throne.

ancestors had gathered should be parcelled out in fragments. They denounced the treachery of their allies, who had coldly carved them in pieces. If the Spanish line was extinct, if a new dynasty must rule, let it rule over the inheritance in its integrity. Who the prince might be, whence he came, what were his connexions—all these, compared to mutilation, were regarded in Madrid as trivial. Accordingly Spain plumped for the Electoral Prince. Where the trunk of their empire was, there the limbs should also go. On November 14 Charles signed and declared a will by which the whole of the Spanish domains passed intact to the Electoral Prince. This decision, for what it was worth, stripped the Emperor even of the Milanese, and it was certain he would not accept it. Nevertheless he did not seem capable of over-riding the will, which even in a degree reinforced the pact which William had reached with Louis. The preponderating and most active forces in Europe seemed capable of imposing the Partition Treaty of 1698 upon the world.

But now a startling event occurred. The Treaty of Partition had been signed at William's palace at Loo in September 1698. The will of Charles II was made public on November 14. On February 6 the little Prince of Bavaria, the heir to these prodigious domains, the child in whose chubby hands the greatest states had resolved to place the most splendid prize, suddenly died. Why did he die, how did he die? A coincidence so extraordinary could not fail to excite dark suspicions. But the fact glared grimly upon the world. All these elaborate, perilous conversations must be begun over again.

The positions of the disputants had changed somewhat by the beginning of 1699. The Treaty of Carlowitz had brought to an end the long Austro-Turkish war. The Emperor was free to concentrate his strength upon the West. Thus Louis XIV's chance of obtaining the entire Spanish heritage for his son or grandson without a serious struggle with the Empire became even smaller. But this advantage was more than balanced by the action of the House of Commons in disbanding the British Army, and by its violent opposition to all Continental entanglements. Ultimately William and Louis arranged a second Treaty of Partition on June 11, 1699. To the disgust of Harcourt, his Ambassador at Madrid, Louis consented to the Archduke Charles being heir-in-chief. To him were assigned Spain, the overseas colonies, and Belgium, on the condition that they should never be united with the Empire. The Dauphin was to have Naples and Sicily, the Milanese, which was to be exchanged for Lorraine, and certain other Italian possessions. The terms of this provisional

treaty allowed the Emperor two months in which to decide whether he would or would not be a party to it. Strenuous diplomatic efforts were made by the Dutch to win his agreement to this huge gratification of his dynastic pride. But his heart was set upon Italy; and he finally refused in the words, "Status valde miserabilis si daremus Gallo quæ peteret; esset potentior!"[1]

On March 13, 1700, therefore, the treaty was ratified only by France and the Maritime Powers.

From this point onward the guile of Louis becomes obvious. During the greater part of 1700, while he was negotiating with William, his Ambassador in Madrid was using every resource, especially money, to win the Spanish Court to the interests of a French prince.[2] At one and the same time he was signing with William the treaty which favoured the Archduke Charles, fomenting a party in Madrid in favour of his grandson, the second son of the Dauphin, Philip, Duke of Anjou, and gradually moving a considerable army towards the Spanish frontier. Since the Emperor would not accept the Partition Treaty, and war between France and the Empire seemed certain, it was natural that, if he must fight anyhow, Louis should fight for the maximum rather than for the minimum claims of his dynasty. Moreover, the weakness of England's pacific mood and the consequent incoherence of the Maritime Powers became continually more apparent. He therefore soothed William with his treaty, and shook Madrid with his propaganda, resolving to seize what fortune should offer.

The event was decisive. Charles II was on his deathbed. Within that diseased frame, that clouded mind, that superstitious soul, trembling on the verge of eternity, there glowed one imperial thought—unity. He was determined as he lay prostrate, scarcely able to utter a word or stir a finger, with his last gasp to proclaim that his vast dominions should pass intact and entire to one prince and to one alone. But to which? His second wife, the Emperor's sister-in-law, naturally favoured the claims of the Austrian Archduke. Her wishes seemed likely to prevail. But in the nick of time the French gold in Madrid and the French bayonets beyond the Pyrenees triumphed. The influence of the Holy See under the new Pope was transferred to the side of France. A palace revolution

[1] "Our condition would be very wretched if we were to give France what she asks; hers would be the stronger."

[2] See the significant correspondence published by C. Hippeau in *L'Avènement des Bourbons* (1875).

occurred. The Archbishop of Toledo, with a few other priests, established himself in the sick-room and forbade the Queen to enter. The King was then persuaded to sign a will leaving his throne to the Duke of Anjou. The will was completed on October 7, and couriers galloped with the news from the Escurial to Paris. On November 1 Charles II expired.

Louis XIV had now reached one of the great turning-points in the history of France. Should he stand by the treaty, reject the will, and face a single war with the Empire? Should he repudiate the treaty, endorse the will, and defend his grandson's claims in the field against all comers? Apart from good faith and solemnly signed agreements upon which the ink was barely dry, the choice, like so many momentous choices, was nicely balanced. Tallard on arriving from England at Fontainebleau on November 2 learned of the will and of the Spanish King's extremity. He advised Louis to maintain the Partition Treaty. War with the Emperor was, in any case, certain, but if the treaty were maintained, the Emperor would find few or no allies. History, he added, showed that a French King of Spain was not necessarily an advantage to France. Torcy supported Tallard. Louis, to gain time to poise and ponder upon the decision, ordered the Dutch Pensionary Heinsius to be informed that he would adhere to the treaty. But while he sought to persuade the Maritime Powers to promise their aid in enforcing it, and thus to divide them from the Emperor, he took care not to close the door in Madrid.

The news of the death of Charles II reached Paris on November 8, and no further delay was possible. According to Saint-Simon, a conference was held in Madame de Maintenon's rooms at which the King, the Dauphin, Pontchartrain (the Chancellor), the Duc de Beauvilliers, and Torcy were present. Torcy and Beauvilliers were for the treaty. The Chancellor and the Dauphin were for the will. The enemies of Madame de Maintenon have alleged, though Torcy denies it, that she swayed the decision. At any rate, the will had it. On November 12 Louis wrote to Madrid accordingly.

On November 16 a famous scene was enacted at Versailles. After the Great King's levee he brought his grandson and the Spanish Ambassador, Castel des Rios, into his cabinet. To the latter he said, indicating the Duke of Anjou, "You may salute him as your King." The Ambassador fell on his knees, kissed the Prince's hand, and made prolonged homage in Spanish. Louis said "He does not yet understand Spanish. It is I who will answer for him."

Thereupon the double doors which led into the grand gallery were opened, and the King said to the assembled courtiers, "Gentlemen, there is the King of Spain. His birth called him to this crown. The Spanish nation has wished it and has demanded it of me. I have granted their wish with joy. It was the command of heaven." Then, turning to the new King, he added, "Be a good Spaniard—that is your first duty; but remember that you are born a Frenchman, and preserve the union between the two nations. That is the way to make them happy and to preserve the peace of Europe." Castel des Rios epitomized the proceedings by his celebrated indiscretion, "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées."

We must now return to England. William was dining at Hampton Court when the news arrived. He bent his head in vain attempt to conceal his feelings. He saw the work of his lifetime was to be shattered, yet he was powerless. He knew it would be futile to appeal to Parliament. He thought of sending Matthew Prior, the poet, to Paris to protest—of summoning the States-General to meet. But Torcy had written a *mémoire justificatif* upon his master's action. His arguments were plausible. The Maritime Powers had failed to guarantee the Partition Treaty; the Emperor would not accept it; the right of the Spanish people to choose their own King was paramount; the separation of the two crowns was promised. Rochester and Godolphin dwelt on the difficulty of forcing upon Spain and the Empire—the two supremely interested parties—an arrangement which they were both prepared to resist in arms. King William bowed to the awful logic of circumstances. On December 22 Tallard was able to report that the English and the Dutch would recognize Philip V. They would merely demand certain safeguards. William could only trust that from the discussion of these safeguards a Grand Alliance against France would emerge.

A contemporary letter from London[1] shows how deeply Louis's good faith was suspected.

> We shall soon see how the Emperor will take such a *camouflet*[2] if you know the word. It is when a puff of smoke is blown into a man's nose. There seems to be great silence at this Court. The Emperor and others in my opinion are dupes. The Treaty was made to amuse the world, and to turn the poor King of Spain to his Will. Monsieur Harcourt's being made a Duke confirms my view; it is his reward for

[1] Michel le Vassor to Sir William Trumbull, November 15, 1700, Downshire Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 800.

[2] A small countermine to break in upon the gallery of a mine. Mines are 'sprung'; camouflets are 'blown.'

managing the Spaniards so well. Tallard is once more dupe; he thought he had made his fortune by making the Treaty, and is only the tool used by his Master in his deception.

We must glance for one moment at the new wearer of the Spanish crown. He was at eighteen a perfect product of the Madame de Maintenon régime at the French Court. He was an ardent Catholic and a devout Frenchman. He was equally averse from either work or pleasure. He suffered all his life from "palpitations and hypochondria," and was very highly sexed. Since his religion allowed him no gratification outside the marriage chamber, a bride was speedily found in a princess of Savoy. At her death he married again immediately on priestly and medical advice. He no doubt wished on entering Spain at the beginning of 1701 to make himself popular. His success was partial. Unpunctuality was his rule of life. He promised to rise early each morning and attend the Council of State. Actually, however, his Ministers, who met at nine, invariably awaited him until eleven. He promised to dine occasionally in public. He ordered supper to be at eight, but rarely sat down till eleven. He could not endure Spanish cooking and speedily replaced his Spanish domestic staff with Frenchmen. He pined for France. He used to shut himself up in his room with a confidant and weep tears at the thought of the delights of Versailles and Fontainebleau. Early in 1702 the Marquis de Louville, who knew him well, prophesied correctly, "C'est un roi qui ne règne pas et qui ne règnera jamais."[1] The King, in fact, was always a tool either in the hands of his grandfather, of his wife's governess, Madame des Ursins, or of his confessors. All the important decisions of Spanish policy were taken henceforward by Louis XIV.

The House of Commons was in a mood far removed from European realities. Neither party would believe that they could be forced into war against their will—still less that their will would change. They had just compelled William to sign the Act of Settlement. They had just completed the disarmament of England. They eagerly accepted Louis XIV's assurance, conveyed through Tallard, that "content with his power, he would not seek to increase it at the expense of his grandson." Lulled by this easy lie, they even deemed the will of Charles II preferable to either of the Partition Treaties. It was, indeed, upon these abortive instruments that the Tory wrath was centred. Not only were the treaties stigmatized as ill advised in themselves, and treacherous to allies, but that they

[1] *Mémoires de Louville*, vol. i.

should have been negotiated and signed in secret was declared a constitutional offence. In chief they assailed Portland for having led the King astray. He replied that the whole Cabinet was responsible. Challenged in the House of Lords to name his associates, he mentioned not only his principal Cabinet colleagues, but Marlborough. Marlborough immediately rose in his place and disclaimed responsibility, adding that if he were free to speak he could prove his statement.[1] The other impugned Ministers followed his example. The Lords demanded that permission should be sought from the King for a full disclosure. Accordingly the next day the Ministers and Marlborough in succession explained that they had been presented with the treaties only as accomplished facts.

In the embryonic condition of Cabinet government which then prevailed such a defence was not invalid. The King was the sole director of foreign policy, and Parliament only assented to it. From the reign of Anne onward the Prime Minister and the Cabinet guided foreign policy. The Commons now exhibited articles of impeachment against Portland and several of the other Ministers, but not against Marlborough, who, though secretly apprised of the transaction, held no office, and was also protected by his Toryism. These impeachments struggled slowly forward against the resistance of the House of Lords. We cannot measure the pressures which were at work, but Marlborough once again chose the Tory Party in preference to the King. He even voted for protests against the decision of the majority of the House of Lords, although these were couched in terms so violent that they have been expunged from the records. Had he been a Secretary of State he would perhaps have shaped the treaties differently, but, wise or unwise, he would not accept the blame for a policy to which he had not been a party, and he no doubt meant this to be plainly understood. Such were his relations with William at the end of 1700.

But now a series of ugly incidents broke from outside upon the fevered complacency of English politics. The first of these brings upon the scene that same Melfort whom we left at Saint-Germains poring with Nairne over the document which purported to be

[1] "L'étonnement des gens qui se trouvèrent nommés fut sans égal, Milord Marlborough prit la parole et dit qu'il estoit vray qu'il avoit eu connoissance dudit traitté, mais qu'on ne trouveroit rien à redire à sa conduite s'il pouvoit parler; or il faut sçavoir pour entendre cette réponse que les Ministres prettent serment de ne rien dire de ce qui se fait dans le conseil et qu'il prétextoit son silence de cette raison." This speech of Marlborough's, given in Tallard's report of March 24, has not been noticed before. For the debate in general see Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, ix, 194 *seq.*

Marlborough's letter betraying the Brest expedition. In February Sir Robert Cotton, the Postmaster-General, found in the English mail-bag from Paris a letter addressed from Melfort in Paris to his elder brother, Perth, at Saint-Germains. The letter spoke of the existence of a strong Jacobite party in Scotland, and discussed, as if it were a matter actually in hand, a plan for the immediate French invasion of England in the Jacobite cause. William pounced upon this as proof of French perfidy. On February 17 he presented it to both Houses of Parliament with the utmost circumstance. There was a strong sensation. Lords and Commons alike were convinced that such a letter could only have been written in time of peace with encouragement from Versailles. The faithful Tallard, found without instructions, defended his master as best he could. Louis was justly incensed. He knew some trick had been played, and with a deeply instructed purpose. Stringent inquiries were made by the French authorities. Melfort protested that he had only written to his brother at Saint-Germains. How, then, had the letter got into the mail for London? It must, suggested Melfort, have been an accident in making up the bags in Paris. The French Government would not accept this excuse. They believed he had written the letter ostensibly to Saint-Germains, but had arranged to have it slipped into the wrong mail with the direct object of embroiling the two countries. They suspected that he had been bribed by one of King William's agents to work this mischief. Although this could not be proved, Melfort was banished to Angers. He never saw James again.

About this same time Parliament began to realize that the language and attitude of the French King about the essential separation of the crowns of France and Spain was, at the very least, ambiguous. In February 1701, indeed, Louis XIV had expressly reserved his grandson's right of succession to the French throne, an action which seemed fatally significant to the Maritime Powers. Then came the news—keenly disturbing to all the British commercial interests represented by the Whig Party as the champions of civil and religious liberty—that the Spaniards had handed over to a French company the entire right of importing negro slaves into South America. It became simultaneously apparent that the freedom of British trade in the Mediterranean was in jeopardy. But the supreme event which roused all England to an understanding of what had actually happened in the virtual union of the crowns of France and Spain was a tremendous military operation effected under the guise of brazen legality. Philip V had been received with acclamation in

Madrid. The Spanish Netherlands rejoiced in his accession. The bonfires blazed in the streets of Brussels in honour of their new sovereign. The fortresses of Belgium constituted the main barrier of the Dutch against the French invasion. After the Peace of Nimwegen the most important had been occupied by Dutch garrisons who shared with their then Spanish allies the guardianship of these vital strongholds. But now the position was reversed. The Spaniards were the allies of France, joined not by a scrap of paper, but by kindred crowns. The European states which had fought against France in the late war were still undecided. But everywhere the storm signal had been hoisted. Preparations were being made; officers and soldiers were being recalled from penury to their old formations. Louis, knowing that his enemies would fight if they could muster strength and courage, resolved to make sure of the barrier fortresses.

William foresaw with agony the approaching blow. During the month of February 1701 strong French forces arrived before all the fortresses of the barrier. The Spanish commanders welcomed them with open gates. They had come, it was contended, only to help protect the possessions of His Most Catholic Majesty. The Dutch garrisons, overawed by force, and no one daring to break the peace, were interned. Antwerp and Mons; Namur—King William's famous conquest—Léau, Venloo, and a dozen secondary strongholds like Ath, Nieuport, Ostende, Oudenarde—all passed in a few weeks, without a shot fired, by the lifting of a few cocked hats, into the hands of Louis XIV. Others, like Liége, Huy, and Ruremonde, fell under his control through the adhesion to France of the Prince-Bishop of Liége. Citadels defended during all the years of general war, the loss or capture of any one of which would have been boasted as the fruits of a hard campaign, were swept away while a moon waxed and waned. Every one of these fortresses had to be retaken by Marlborough before he could even reach the position established at the Peace of Nimwegen. Only Maestricht, by the accident of an exceptionally strong Dutch garrison which guarded enormous supply depots, escaped the general landslide. Thus all that the Grand Alliance of 1689 had achieved in the Low Countries in eight years of war melted like snow at Easter.

Europe was roused, and at last England was staggered. Some of Louis's admirers condemn him for this violent measure. They argue that when all was going so well for his designs, when his grandson had been accepted as rightful King by every part of the Spanish

Empire in the Old World and the New, when his adversaries in their lack of union seemed utterly impotent, he should have displayed all the virtues of quiescence and restraint. But, like William, he knew that the storm was gathering. He had launched himself upon an audacious voyage; and he knew the value of the fortresses. The nations were now arming fast, and we may imagine with what a glow of hope and salvation all those poor, neglected, despised, professional soldiers saw again the certainty of employment, of pay, of food, of shelter, and the chance of fame. Once more fighting men would come into their own. Once more the drums would beat, and the regiments in their brilliant uniforms would march along the highways. Once more the smug merchants and crafty politicians would find they could not do without 'popinjays.' Once more they would flatter the martial class and beg—though so lately ungrateful—for its renewed protection.

In the early summer of 1701 the Whig Party, a minority in the House of Commons, mobilized its pamphleteers to convert the electorate. Daniel Defoe led the band. Their main theme was the danger to English commerce from a French King in Spain. An interesting tract, *The Duke of Anjou's Succession Considered*, devoted the whole of its second part to the trade question. "Our all is now at stake, and perhaps in as great a danger as at any time since we were a nation." Thus the Whigs. But the Tories were slow in realizing the evolution of opinion which was already so marked. They were still hunting William III and planning retrenchment. They were still dreaming of detachment from Europe when the nation awoke beneath them. On May 8, 1701, the freeholders of Kent presented a petition to the Commons, begging the House to grant supplies to enable the King to help his allies "before it is too late." The militant pacifists were for punishing the freeholders for their presumption. They actually imprisoned their leaders; but the ground crumbled beneath their feet. The insular structure in which they sought to dwell crashed about their ears. The mass of the Tory Parliament had already moved some distance. On June 12, when they had extorted from the King his assent to the Act of Settlement, Parliament had also authorized him to "seek allies." Ten thousand men, at any rate, should be guaranteed to Holland. They still pushed forward with the obsolete impeachments of Portland and his colleagues; but William felt the tide had set in his favour, and on the flow he prorogued Parliament, well knowing that their hour had passed.

French writers are prone to underrate the deep feelings of resentment which grew up during 1701 in both England and Holland at the spectacle of Louis XIV actually taking over the government of the Spanish Empire. With every month that passed the appalling realities penetrated wider circles; but the manner in which William III organized and harnessed the gathering wrath for resistance to French aggression commands just admiration. At the end of 1700 the French agents in London and at The Hague reported that there was not the least likelihood of either of the Maritime Powers declaring war upon France; but William, although he knew himself a doomed man and saw his life's work collapsing before his eyes, turned every mistake made by Louis to so much account that by the middle of 1701 the two parties in opposition to him, the Tory majority in the House of Commons and the powerful burgesses of Amsterdam, were both begging him to do everything that he "thought needful for the preservation of the peace of Europe" —that is to say, for war.

The same processes which undermined the Tory factions and all their reasonings, so weighty to modern minds, united William and Marlborough. They joined forces, nor was their partnership unequal. For while King William now saw that he could once again draw the sword of England, he felt the melancholy conviction that he himself would never more wield it. This was no time on either side for half-confidences or old griefs. Some one must carry on. In his bones the King knew there was but one man. On May 31 he proclaimed Marlborough Commander-in-Chief of the English forces assembling in Holland. On June 28—the day of the Prorogation—he appointed him Ambassador Extraordinary to the United Provinces. The instructions to Marlborough[1] show the far-reaching character of his powers. Discretion was given him not only to frame, put to conclude treaties without reference, if need be, to King or Parliament. But the King would be at hand and would maintain the closest contact possible. On July 1 the royal yacht carried them both to Holland. Though the opportunities of the reign had been marred or missed by their quarrels and misunderstandings, the two warrior-statesmen were at last united. Though much was lost, all might be retrieved. The formation of the Grand Alliance had begun.

[1] See Appendix, III.

Chapter Thirty-two

THE GRAND ALLIANCE

1701–1702

THE duties at length confided to Marlborough were of supreme importance. He was to make one last effort to avert the war. If that failed, he was to make an offensive and defensive alliance against France between the three great Powers, England, Holland, and the Empire; thereafter to draw into the confederacy by subsidiary treaties Prussia, Denmark, and as many of the German states and principalities as possible, and to make a treaty with Sweden ensuring at least her friendly neutrality. He was to settle by negotiation the *dénombrement—i.e.*, the quota of troops and seamen which each signatory would provide for the common cause—and to arrange the military precedence of the officers of the various allied forces. Besides this he was to receive, distribute, organize, train, and command the British army now assembling behind the Dutch frontier; and finally to provide for their munitions and food not only in 1701 for a possible autumn, but for a certain spring campaign in 1702. The King was at hand, usually at Loo, but in practice everything was left to Marlborough and settled by him. Meanwhile through Godolphin he vigilantly watched the tempestuous Parliamentary situation at home, the movement of English opinion, and the reactions which these produced upon King William. In this press of affairs he passed the next four months, and for the first time we see him extended upon a task equal to his capacity.

At this moment also two men who were to be his closest intimates and to continue at his side in unfailing loyalty through the whole period make their appearance. They were already his old friends.[1] William Cadogan, the son of a Dublin lawyer, had won Marlborough's confidence at the taking of Cork and Kinsale. He was now serving in Ireland as a major of the Inniskilling Dragoons. Marlborough appointed him Quartermaster-General in the Low

[1] See the articles on these men in *D.N.B.* There are a large number of Cadogan's and Cardonnel's letters in the British Museum.

Countries, and he came to Holland with the twelve battalions transported thither from Ireland. Throughout the ten campaigns he was not only Quartermaster-General, but what we should call Chief of the Staff and Director of Intelligence. It was Marlborough's practice to send with the reconnoitring cavalry an officer of high rank who knew the Commander-in-Chief's mind and his plans and could observe the enemy through his eyes. Cadogan repeatedly played this part, and on a larger scale his advance-guard action at Oudenarde is a model of military competence, discretion, and daring. He was in the van of all the battles and in numberless operations. Nothing disturbed his fidelity to his chief or the mutual comprehension between them. He shared Marlborough's fall, refusing to separate himself from "the great man to whom I am under such infinite obligations." "I would be a monster," he added, "if I did otherwise."

The second was his military and political secretary. Adam de Cardonnel, the son of a French Protestant, had entered the War Office at an early age, rose to be a Chief Clerk, and came in contact with Marlborough at the beginning of William's reign. From the early part of 1692 he had acted as his secretary, and was in his closest personal friendship and confidence. He too made all the campaigns with Marlborough. He conducted the whole of his correspondence with the sovereigns, princes, and commanders of the Grand Alliance and with the English political leaders, drafting the letters himself, writing from Marlborough's dictation, or copying what his chief had written, to the very great advantage of its grammar and spelling. Cardonnel also was to "pursue the triumph and partake the gale." Thus when the occasion came to Marlborough he was not only ready himself, but he had at his disposal both a military and a civilian instrument which he had long selected and prepared, and which were so perfectly adapted to his needs that they were never changed.

At this moment also appears upon our scene Marlborough's famous comrade. During the spring the Emperor, with the encouragement of King William, had gathered an army of thirty thousand men in the Southern Tyrol. At the head of this stood Prince Eugene.

Prince François Eugene of Savoy[1] was born at Paris in 1663,

[1] There is unhappily no good book in English on Prince Eugene. In German the biography by A. von Arneth (1864) has not been superseded, but no translation has appeared. There are various subsequent German monographs on aspects of Eugene's

but from the age of twenty, for just over fifty years and in more than thirty campaigns, he commanded the armies and fought the battles of Austria on all the fronts of the Empire. When he was not fighting the French, he was fighting the Turks. A colonel at twenty, a major-general at twenty-one, he was made a general of cavalry at twenty-six. He was a commander-in-chief ten years before Marlborough. He was still a commander-in-chief, fighting always in the van, more than twenty years after Marlborough's work was done. At the end of his life of innumerable and almost unceasing perils, toils, checks, and triumphs, his skinny body scarred with many wounds, he could still revel in his military duties. He never married, and although he was a discerning patron of art, his only passion was warfare. His decisive victory over the Turks at Zenta in 1697 made him at this moment in our story "the most renowned commander in Europe."[1]

Eugene was a grandson of Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy and son of Olympe Mancini, a niece of Cardinal Mazarin and one of the most beautiful women at the Court of Louis XIV. As a youth, his weakly frame, turned-up nose, and short upper lip gave him, despite his fine eyes, a vacant appearance and caused him to be considered unfit for a soldier. Against his will he was forced to enter the Church, and the King nicknamed him *le petit abbé*. Intrigue at Court twice brought about his father's exile. His mother's grief at this misfortune weighed deeply upon the young mind of the Prince, and he is said to have sworn to leave France and never to return except with his sword in his hand. He became the persistent enemy of France throughout his life. After the early death of his father, Eugene, with two of his brothers, migrated to Vienna. His lack of frivolity, which had injured him at Versailles, was a positive advantage to him at the sombre Court of Leopold I. His earliest experience of war was in the fateful year of 1683, when the Turks reached the gates of Vienna. Here his eldest brother was

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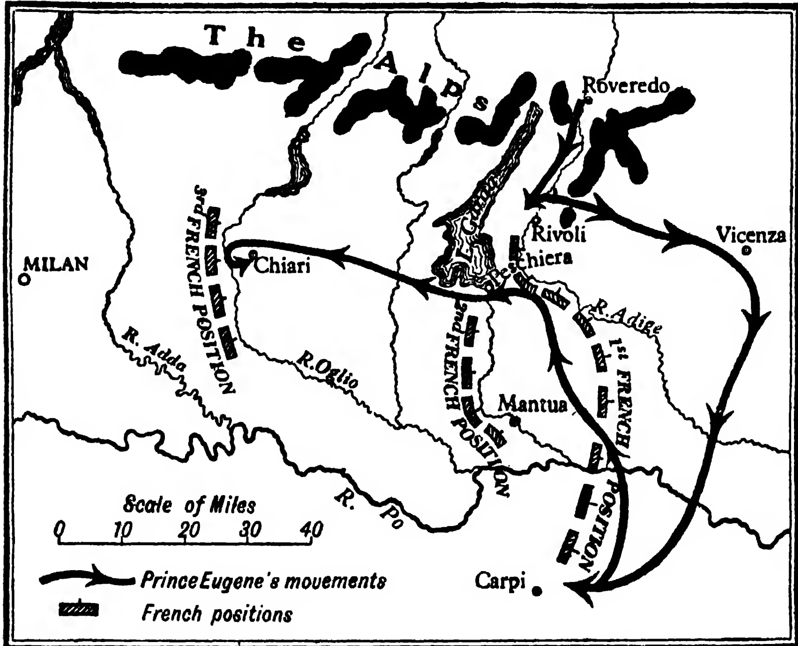
career, but historical study is handicapped by the fact that during the anti-Napoleonic movement in Austria in 1810–11 a large number of spurious or forged volumes of letters and memoirs attributed to Eugene were produced and obtained a huge circulation. A volume of memoirs written by a Prince Charles de Ligne, concocted out of a French compilation of more or less authentic anecdotes by M. Mauvillon, was translated into English and is still widely extant. The casual reader must be warned against this agreeable forgery. *Cf.* the interesting discussion by Bruno Böhm in *Die Sammlung der hinterlassenen politischen Schriften des Prinzes Eugen von Savoyen: Eine Fälschung des 19ten Jahrhunderts* (1900), especially the appendix.

[1] Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (1906), p. 259.

killed. But Eugene made his mark in a strange land. The Emperor liked and admired him. He saw warfare in its most ruthless forms, and fought under the leadership of the famous Charles of Lorraine. After he had become a colonel Eugene abandoned his desire for a principality in Italy, and fixed as his sole ambition the command of the Imperial Army.

Louis, in execution of the Spanish will, had entered Lombardy,



EUGENE'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY

and a French army under Catinat occupied Mantua and the valley of the Po, and held the line of the Adige from the foot of Lake Garda to the territories of the Venetian Republic. Catinat also watched in force all the passes leading south-westward from the Tyrol to the plains of Lombardy and Milan. Eugene and his Austrian army, concentrated at Roveredo, had a numerous choice of difficult and dangerous advances against very superior French forces. Only the epitome of his brilliant campaign can be given here. He pretended he would strike right-handed towards Milan, but instead climbed south-eastward over the mountains and debouched into Italy by little-known, unexpected passes. He marched rapidly through Vicenza

and violated the neutrality of Venice. By this "expedient not the most delicate"[1] he reached the plains and outwitted Catinat, whose orders strictly enjoined him to respect Venetian neutrality. Catinat, instead of seeking battle with Eugene wherever he might find him, sought to defend the line of the Adige. He spread his troops along a front of sixty miles. Eugene, pouncing upon his right detachment at Carpi on July 9, pierced and turned the French front. Catinat fell back upon the Mincio. Eugene, after defeating him again at Nogara, marched against his other flank on Lake Garda at Peschiera and drove him back, threatening his communications with Milan. Catinat retreated to the Oglio, and was here superseded by Marshal Villeroy, who had arrived from Flanders. Eugene entrenched himself at Chiari, and repulsed with heavy losses on September 1 Villeroy's attack. He thus established himself in Lombardy and settled down for the winter after a series of manœuvres and combats which in audacity and success suggest Napoleon's campaigns on the same battle-grounds a century later.

"The King," Cardonnel tells us on July 4,

> arrived at the Hague from Margate surprisingly quickly as the wind changed. . . . My Lord Marlborough followed very slow [*i.e.*, from the coast] and got hither last night. His lordship has taken a house in this place where I believe he will make his Chief Residence unless a War call him into Brabant.[2]

But the States-General soon put at his disposal the house of Prince Maurice near the King's palace.[3] In this beautiful building, to be destroyed by fire in 1704, Charles II had feasted on the eve of the Restoration. The Mauritshuis now became the centre from which the Grand Alliance was framed. Thither resorted the envoys and plenipotentiaries of many countries. It was the scene of conclaves and negotiations and of the banquets and ceremonies then judged indispensable to high diplomacy. In all this Marlborough excelled. His charm, his tact, his unfailing sagacity, his magnificent appearance, and the fact that the King seemed to confide everything to his hands, gained him immediately a pre-eminent influence. Almost at once he won the regard of the Pensionary Heinsius, and here again began one of those long, unbreakable associations which are characteristic

[1] Charles de Ligne's expression in the spurious memoirs.

[2] Cardonnel to Ellis, Under-Secretary of State, Whitehall (must be Hague), July 4/15, 1701 (Add. MSS., 20917, f. 309).

[3] "The States have lent me Prince Morris's house" (Marlborough to Godolphin, July 19/30, 1701, Blenheim MSS.).

of the great period of his life. From The Hague he could also transact his military affairs and supervise the camps near the frontier, or attend the King at Loo. At the end of August he visited the English troops at Breda and inspected other garrisons, and a month later accompanied William upon a similar tour. At its close he entertained the King and the principal generals at a dinner at Breda in full military state. This was the last time King William was to see an armed camp.

In essence the second Grand Alliance was bound to become another Partition Treaty. Hard pressure had to be put upon the Emperor to reconcile his extortionate demands with the claims of Holland, and thereafter English interests had to be sustained against both Powers. Marlborough, with the angry debates upon William's Partitions in his ears, was intent to study the susceptibilities of the House of Commons, and also to secure due prominence for the particular kind of buccaneering warfare on the sea and across the oceans which was alone acceptable to Tory hearts. In the end he presented results which reconciled the pride of the Empire, the cautious obstinacy of the Dutch, and the commercial and colonizing appetites of the English. His letter to Godolphin of July 22 gives a clear account of the opening stage.

> A great deal of time was spent in the emperor's ministers complaining of the Treaty of Partition, and when we came to the business for which we met, they would have the foundation of the treaty to be for lessening the power of France, and assisting the emperor in his just rights to the monarchy of Spain. But the Pensionary would not consent to anything further, than that the emperor ought to be satisfied with having Flanders, which would be a security to the Dutch, and Milan as a fief of the empire. After four hours' wrangling, the two envoys went away; and then I endeavoured to let the Pensionary see that no treaty of this kind would be acceptable in England, if there were not care taken of the Mediterranean and the West Indies. When I gave the King an account, he was of my mind, so that the Pensionary has promised to use his endeavours with the town of Amsterdam; for they are unwilling to consent to anything more than Flanders and Milan.[1]

Although French and Austrian troops were already fighting fiercely in Italy, the last hopes of a general peace were not aban-

[1] Marlborough to Godolphin, July 11/22 (Coxe). In another letter of the same date he notes that the King has had one conversation with the French Ambassador "of no great consequence" and left The Hague without speaking to him again in private (Blenheim MSS.).

doned. Marlborough had been given a separate set of instructions to enter into negotiations with the Ministers of France and Spain at The Hague. He demanded once again on behalf of the Maritime Powers the withdrawal of the French garrisons from the barrier fortresses, the surrender of "cautionary towns" by the Spaniards to Anglo-Dutch control, and the guarantee of "a reasonable satisfaction" for the Emperor out of the Spanish heritage. He seems to have thought it just possible that Eugene's victories in Italy, the process of forming the Grand Alliance at The Hague, and the evident resolve of the Allies to proceed to extremities would oblige Louis to agree in August to the terms he had rejected in March. Soon after his arrival at The Hague he informed D'Avaux of his instructions to *travailler à un accom[m]odement*.[1] How far he expected success is difficult to decide. "You may know," he wrote to Godolphin,[2] "as much of peace and war as we do here, for the whole depends upon the French, for if they will not give a reasonable satisfaction to the Emperor, you know what the consequence of that will be." The issue was soon decided. The French King refused to consider the Emperor's demands, or even to admit to a conference the Ambassador of a Power with whom, though not formally at war, his troops were already engaged. On August 5 D'Avaux left The Hague for Paris.

Heavy fighting might now begin in the Netherlands at any moment. Boufflers and Villeroy were known to be consulting at Namur. The utmost vigilance was required. Already on August 1 Marlborough had written to Sarah, who was eager to join him at The Hague:

DIEREN
August 1

*I came on Wednesday night to Loo, and yesterday to this place, where I found the King ill of his knee. We all hope here it's the gout, and I think it is, but not in that violent degree that others have it. He is now better, and it is to be hoped he will not continue long lame, for the King of France has recalled his ambassador from the Hague, so that now we shall quickly see if he will begin the war, which makes me with a good deal of uneasiness tell you that you must defer your kind thoughts of a journey to this country until I can let you know a little more certainly how I shall be disposed of, for our actions now must be governed by what France will think fit to do.

[1] D'Avaux to Louis XIV, August 4, 1701 (Legrelle, *La Diplomatie française et Succession de L'Espagne*, v, 146).

[2] July 18/29, 1701, Blenheim MSS.

Onthe 12th he wrote to Brydges:

HAGUE
August 12, 1701

*SR.

. . . I shall lose no opportunity of behaving myself towards you as one friend should towards another. We are here in very great expectation of the success that may be in Italy, being persuaded that the French will be reasonable, or otherwise according to what shall happen there. On this side it does not look as if there would be any action, this season, notwithstanding here is at least one hundred thousand men of a side which makes the frontier towns much crowded, although we have two camps. The English have orders to be in readiness to march, but I hope his Majesty will have the goodness not to draw them into the field, unless there should be an absolute necessity, the greatest part of the men being new raised.[1]

When, on the 18th, he learned that Villeroy had left for Italy he felt sure that France had abandoned any thought of opening a campaign in Flanders during the autumn of 1701. Forthwith he allowed Sarah to come over for the greatest day his life had yet seen. On September 7, 1701, he signed alone for England the main treaty with the Empire and Holland by which the three Powers bound themselves to exact their terms from France by negotiations or arms. Sarah was present at his side in his hour of triumph. She was fêted by the brilliant throng assembled for that famous event. She even received a visit from "Caliban" at Loo.[2]

Great moderation characterized the stipulations of the allies. They acquiesced in the rule of Philip V over Spain and the Spanish Indies, provided that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united. The Emperor was to secure Milan, Naples, Sicily, the Spanish Mediterranean islands, together with Belgium and Luxembourg. But these last two, under the sovereignty of Austria, were to be so organized as to serve "as a fence and rampart, commonly called a barrier, separating and keeping off France from the United provinces." This basis being settled, the minor states were urged by subsidies provided by England and Holland and by other inducements to join the alliance, and with each a separate agreement was made. The recognition of the Elector of Brandenburg as King in Prussia was the price reluctantly paid by the Emperor in return for his adhesion.

[1] Stowe MSS., 58, i, 25 (Huntington Library).

[2] "Lady Marlborough came to Loo on Saturday evening and had the honour of a visit from the King in her apartment."—Cardonnel to Ellis, October 10/21, 1701, Add. MSS., 20917, f. 358.

The case of Sweden was special. The remarkable military caste which had developed in this small but virile northern kingdom had impressed itself upon Europe since the days of Gustavus Adolphus, and now found itself headed by a warrior prince who revived in dramatic guise the image of his famous ancestor. Charles XII had just extorted peace from Denmark and Poland by an audacious campaign, and had defeated Russia at surprising odds in the battle of Narva. He and his redoubtable mercenaries were amenable to flattery and gold. Marlborough used both with deftness. The impulsive, passionate character of Charles XII made the negotiations "a very ticklish business."[1] The natural bias of the Swedes since the time of Gustavus Adolphus was Francophile and anti-Austrian. Marlborough achieved in 1701 what he was to repeat in 1707. He kept Charles XII and his army out of Western and Central Europe. The French were also in the market with competing bribes of money; but the Englishman prevailed. On September 26 he could write to Godolphin, "I have this evening signed the Swedish Treaty. . . . I was convinced if I had not done it, the French moneys must have been accepted." The treaty was to be ratified within six weeks. Marlborough, with his eye on the House of Commons, had deliberately withheld his signature of the main treaty, as well as of the separate treaty between England and Holland, till after they had been submitted to the Ministry at home. In the Swedish case alone did he consider it necessary to sign promptly without reference even to the Lords Justices in England. The Swedish treaty cleared the path of Denmark. The Danes, thus freed from the peril at their gates, were able to join the Alliance upon adequate gratifications with 5000 troops at once and 20,000 in prospect. Thus while the French were gathering their forces in Belgium and Luxembourg the army which was to meet them in the spring, raised and bound together by the wealth of the Maritime Powers, came swiftly into being under the hand of its future leader.

The territorial objectives of the war having been at length agreed, the three principals proceeded to discuss the *dénombrement*. It was finally settled that the Empire should bring into the field against France 82,000 men, the Dutch 100,000, and the English 40,000, together with an equal number for the fleet. Archdeacon Coxe had the misfortune to leave out a nought from the Dutch total, which he stated at no more than 10,000 men. This obvious slip or misprint has ever since been dutifully copied by many historians and

[1] Marlborough to Godolphin, August 26, Blenheim MSS.

biographers.[1] Thus easily do chains of error trail link after link through history. The following hitherto unpublished letter from Marlborough to Godolphin sent after the conclusion of the treaty makes the position clear:[2]

HAGUE
Sept. 6/17, 1701

*We have had the wind so contrary, that I believe the treaty which I have sent is not yet arrived. The Emperor's Minister has given the number of his Master's troops, which amounts in all to one hundred, and eight thousand men, of which they will be obliged to send four score and two thousand to act against France, as we shall agree; the rest must continue in Hungary, and their garrisons. The number of Dutch troops are near one hundred thousand, besides what they send to sea, so that it will be my part now to speak for England, and though I am fully resolved not to finish this matter till the Parliament meets, yet I must say something, and I desire to know your opinion, if I should not acquaint the Lords Justices, and desire their directions. The King is very desirous to have me conclude the Treaty with the King of Prussia. I shall give all the obstructions I can to its dispatch, being persuaded it would be for the best, if it were not signed till Parliament were acquainted with it, so that I must desire your assistance, for I am afraid it will be impossible to avoid the agreeing, so as to send it to the Lords Justices, for their approbation; but I believe that I maybe so near the time of Parliament meeting, that I hope you will advise, it should not be signed till after their meeting. I wrote a very long letter to you by the last post, of my thoughts concerning the [dissolution of] Parliament. If you should be of my mind I would press that matter so, as that I hope it might prevent the confusion, I think a new Parliament might occasion.

He adds a passage coming strangely from a man upon whom the beams of fortune, long withheld, now shone so brightly.

I must own to you that I have a great many melancholy thoughts, and am very much of the opinion that nobody can be very happy that is in business. However I can't hinder being so selfish, as to wish you may not have that ease of being out, as long as I must be employed, which can't be long if you should have reason to be dissatisfied, which makes me beg in friendship you will take no resolutions till I have the happiness of seeing you.

[1] *E.g.*, Wolseley, ii, 400; Taylor, i, 45; Atkinson, 160.

[2] The exact figures are also to be found in the *Commons Journal*, xiii, 64–65. The Emperor was to provide sixty-six regiments of foot and twenty-four of horse, the Dutch eighty-two foot and twenty horse, the English thirty-three foot and seven horse. The Commons agreed to these proportions on January 10, 1702.

I am afraid Lady Marlborough has stayed two days too long, for the wind that has been so very fair is now come into the East. . . .

It will be seen that Marlborough's fear of offending Parliament by finally deciding the treaties without their approval was even more acute where the quota of British troops was concerned. No more legible measure of the forces then at work in England can be found than their effect at this time upon his experienced judgment. Expressions of extravagant vehemence leap from his cool, sober, matter-of-fact mind: "I had much rather be buried alive than be the fatal instrument of such misfortunes"; "Before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing." Lord Wolseley sees in this an indication that he was already turning Whig. But this entirely misreads the situation. Marlborough was thinking more of his Tory friends than of the Whigs. He knew the enormous difficulty of bringing the Tories into the war, and how readily they would bridle at any constitutional breach. The Whigs, though even more constitutionally minded, wanted the war and were not inclined to be too particular.

On October 3 he writes to Godolphin:

*. . . You will excuse me that I trouble you again about the *dénombrement*. I have made use of the argument, that is very natural for England, which is that their [England's] expense at sea must be great. This argument is of more use to me when I speak to the Imperialists, than with the Pensioner; for the latter tells me, that they shall be willing to furnish at sea the same proportions as they did the last war, which was three in eight; and since their land forces are greater than they were the last war, the people here might reasonably expect that ours might not be less. I continue still of the opinion that it would be fatal to have this settled anywhere but in Parliament; but on the other hand I ought to say something to them, and I should be glad to know if I might not endeavour to make them not expect more than one half of what they had the last war. For aught I know, this may be more than England will care to do; but I hear no other language here, than that this war must be carried with more vigour than the last, if we ever hope to see a good end of it; and I confess it is so much my own opinion, that I hope we shall do our utmost; what that is, you and 16 [Hedges?] are much properer judges than I am. When the King speaks to you of this matter, I beg you will be positive in the opinion that it is of the last consequence [not] to do anything in it, but in Parliament. That which makes me the more pressing in this of the *dénombrement* is that the Pensioner is inclined to have it done before the Parl meets; which I think would be destruction.[1]

[1] This and the following four letters in this chapter are printed from the original at Blenheim.

And, on the same day, to Hedges, one of the Secretaries of State:

★. . . I can't let this go without giving you some account as to my thoughts concerning the *dénombrement* and I do with all my heart wish that you and I may not differ in this matter, which I take to be of the last consequence. . . . Count Ratisloe [Wratislaw] insists that we should furnish the same number of troops we did the last war, his Master having a greater army than at any time the last war. The Dutch with a great deal more reason think it would be very hard if our numbers should be much less than they were the last war, since theirs are greater. . . .

Now that I have said this, I will let you know the method I could wish the King would be pleased to take, which is very plainly to let Parliament know what the Emperor and the Dutch are to furnish, and at the same time to give his own opinion very frankly, and that by the 24 of Nov. our style, which is the day the two months ends mentioned in the treaty with the Emperor, he is obliged to fix this *dénombrement.* I think by this method we shall have the Parliament on our side, by which we shall gain a greater number of men than the other way. Were I with you I could say a great deal upon this subject, for I am so very fully persuaded that if the King should be prevailed upon to settle this by his own authority, that we shall never see a quiet day more in England, and consequently not only ruin our selves, but also undo the liberties of Europe; for if the King and Parliament begin with a dispute, France will give what Laws she pleases. I am sure I had much rather be buried alive than be the fatal instrument of such misfortunes. I have opened myself very freely to you, but desire nobody else may know it.

Again, on the 21st he wrote to Godolphin:

★It is very plain to me that the Pensioner continues his opinion, that I ought to finish the *dénombrement* before the meeting of Parliament. I have been so positive that he despairs of prevailing upon me; but I am afraid he hopes the King may be able, when he comes to England, to persuade yourself and the Cabinet Council to it, so that I may have orders sent me, believing that I should then make no difficulty; but I do assure you that I am so persuaded that the doing of this, by his Majesty's authority, would prove so fatal to himself and the kingdom, that I should desire to be recalled; for, before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing.

While all these preparations resounded upon the anvil of Europe, both sides, though yielding nothing further, nevertheless still hoped against hope for peace. As so often happens in world affairs, and particularly in English affairs, a sense of dire necessity grows in

men's minds and yet they shrink from action. The atmosphere is loaded with inflammable gas: but a flash is needed to produce the explosion.

On September 16, 1701, James II died. Louis visited in state his deathbed at Saint-Germains. While the unhappy exile was in the stertorous breathing which often precedes the flight of the soul, the Grand Monarch announced to the shadow Court that he recognized his son as King of England and would ever sustain his rights. Chivalry, vanity, and a recklessness born of the prolonged suspense had impelled Louis to this most imprudent act. He upheld it in face of the solid opposition of his Cabinet. Its consequences surprised him beyond measure. All England was roused by the insult to her independence. The Act of Settlement had decreed the succession of the crown. The Treaty of Ryswick had bound Louis not only in formal terms, but by a gentleman's agreement, to recognize and not to molest William III as King. The domestic law of England was outraged by the arrogance, and her treaty rights violated by the perfidy, of the French despot. Whigs and Tories vied with one another in Parliament in resenting the affront. Was England, then, a vassal of France on whom a king could be imposed and despite all plighted faith? The whole nation became resolute for war. Marlborough's treaties, shaped and presented with so much Parliamentary understanding, were acclaimed; ample supplies were tendered to the Crown. King William saw his moment had come. Forthwith upon the news he recalled his Ambassador from Paris and dismissed Tallard from St James's. Now also was the time to rid himself of the Tory Party, which had used him so ill and in their purblind folly had tied his hands till all seemed ruined. Now was the time to hale before the bar of an awakened nation those truculent, pigheaded Commoners who had so provedly misjudged the public interest. The King saw his way to a sound Whig Parliament for the vigorous waging of war. Whispers of Dissolution pervaded the high circles of Court and politics.

Marlborough watched the King attentively. He read his mind and dreaded his purpose. The expulsion of the Tories in a disastrous war-fever election would undermine all the power and credit he had acquired in these spacious months. Moreover, he judged better than the King the inherent strength of Tory England. Even taken at so great a disadvantage, the Tories would be strong enough to wreck, if they could not rule. Only the peace party could draw the sword of England. A Whig triumph at the polls threatened a divided

nation in the war. He used all his arts to dissuade William from the course upon which he saw him bent. The King, though filled with admiration at the capacity of his lieutenant, discounted his advice as interested, and held to his design. Marlborough obtained a long, reasoned letter from Godolphin extolling the Tory Parliament and its alacrity for war. He read it to William:

*Yours of the 3/14 surprises me extremely. To hear that on that side of the water the king hears no discourse but of a new parliament is an amazing thing, especially if one considers the particulars of what this parliament has done and how they left the public affairs when they parted. They provided, while they were in expectation only that a War might come on, the greatest Supplies that ever were given when the Kingdom was not in actual war, and those Supplies upon the best funds that ever were given, because they were such as could not create a deficiency, and they made an Address to the king toward the end of the session, of which by the way he was very sensible at that time and thanked them very heartily for it, to desire him to enter into Alliance[s] for the good of Europe and to assure him they would stand by him & support him in such Alliances as he should think fit to make: the plain Consequence of which address was and is to make him the arbiter of war or peace, and to trust the matter entirely in his hands.[1]

The King, so intimate and open with Marlborough in all the rest of the great affair, became cold and unresponsive. Godolphin, feeling his position as a Tory Minister about to be destroyed, wished to resign. Marlborough exhorted him to remain. He was himself concerned to return with the King of England and not to lose touch with him for a day; but William shook him off. He did not mean to be persuaded. "I have but just time to tell you," wrote Marlborough about September 18, "that as the king went into his coach he told me that he would write to me, by which I understand that I am not to stir from hence till I hear from him. . . ."[2] The King quitted Holland suddenly, leaving Marlborough thus chained to his post. Several weeks passed before the efforts of Godolphin and Albemarle secured him permission to come home. On the very day his letter of recall arrived Marlborough learned that Parliament was dissolved and that Godolphin had resolved to resign.

Other anxieties, apparently serious, had arisen before William's departure about the ceremonial to be observed upon King James's death.

[1] Extract: the letter is much longer.
[2] Marlborough to Godolphin, September 1701.

Hague Oct: 24. 1701

Since last night the Wind is chang'd, so that the King has sent directions for the Proroguing the Parl: for a Weeke and soe on till he shall arrive; if the wind shou'd come faire he is resolv'd to Embarke to morrow, but the Seamen think it will not be till the fullmoon.

A LETTER FROM MARLBOROUGH TO GODOLPHIN

Blenheim MSS.

Loo
September 16/27, 1701

*The King just took notice to me of the mourning and commanded me to write to the Princess to let her know that he should mourn for King James, but that he intended to put himself his Coaches and Liveries in mourning but not his apartments, and that he desired the Princess would do the same, by which he meant she should not put St James's in mourning; so that if she had thoughts of it, you see it can't be. So that you will be pleased to give my humble duty to her Highness, and that I beg she will give you leave to turn this business so as that it may be well taken of the king, and consequently do her Highness good in England. For if after this she should put her house in mourning, for God's sake think what an outcry it would make in England.[1]

The election belied King William's hopes. Although a cluster of his personal assailants and many Jacobites lost their seats in the Whig attack, the Tories were found to have, as Marlborough had predicted, a very solid core. They actually carried Harley back to the Speaker's chair in the new Parliament by a majority of four. The two parties were so even that, for all their hatred, they could scarcely maul one another. This in itself was a gain; but, on the other hand, the Tory rage against the King was mortal. They held that he had flung them to the country wrongfully within a year of their return at a time when they were giving him loyal and resolute support. He had played a party trick upon them, and the trick had failed. They never forgave him; they longed for his death. Nevertheless they joined with the Whigs in supporting his war.

The turn of affairs had brought about a sensible change in Marlborough's political position. In spite of Godolphin's demand to resign, the Tory Ministry had been kept by the King till he could see the election results. From his point of view this half-measure was a mistake, for the party in power had great influence upon the poll. After the results were known, the King felt himself strong enough to get rid of the Tories. He sent Rochester packing and released Godolphin. Marlborough's case was that of a man all of whose colleagues have been dismissed, but who has himself become detached from their fortunes by the importance of a foreign mission for which all parties judge him supremely fitted. Moreover, although he had worked consistently in the Tory interest and kept all his labels unchanged, he had become in fact the mainspring of the Whig policy in Europe. Thus both parties looked to him with regard and

[1] Marlborough to Godolphin.

recognized, however grudgingly, that he was above their warfare. This was not the result of calculation on his part, for the happenings had been often contrary to his wishes and almost entirely beyond his control. Events had detached him from his party and left him, without partisan reproach, independent on the hub of affairs. Henceforward he ceased gradually to be a party man, though still of Tory hue. We shall see him try long and hard to keep this neutral footing until he is driven through coalition to the Whigs and finally destroyed by the revengeful Tories.

Meanwhile he walked delicately. Davenant, hitherto a pro-French Tory pamphleteer, had turned with the tide, and now urged men to lay aside their party feelings for the good of the public and in face of the common enemy. Before he quitted The Hague Marlborough wrote to Brydges[1] praising Davenant's pamphlet and hoping that he would persuade people to take the necessary measures against France. On January 27 the Dutch envoy in England mentions the strength of the Tories in the New House, and relates how Marlborough, Godolphin, and Rooke, the Admiral, were present at a party meeting in Sir Edward Seymour's house. But three days later he notes of Marlborough, "Having no longer Rochester and Godolphin to support him in the Council, he has to trim even more cleverly between both sides."[2] In spite of the change of Government, Marlborough continued to conduct English foreign policy as the King's agent, and two of his conversations with Wratislaw, the Austrian Ambassador, have been preserved.

Parliament on Tory initiative had asked the King to take steps to obtain the addition to the Grand Alliance of an article to the effect that no peace should be concluded with France until the King and the nation had received satisfaction for the great injury done to them by the French King in the recognition and proclamation of the pretended Prince of Wales as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Marlborough, at the King's desire, opened the matter to Wratislaw.

> Wratislaw said there was no need for a special article of the kind suggested as the Emperor had already in the Alliance undertaken such an obligation generally. Marlborough replied that that was not sufficient. The separate article was necessary to bring England into the

[1] Marlborough to Brydges, November 14/25, 1701, Huntington Library MSS.

[2] "Ce qu'on en peut dire est que, se menageant en habile homme des deux costes, il est a croire que n'ayant plus dans le conseil le comte de Rochester et my [lord] Godolphin pour l'appuyer, il se menagera encore davantage pour bien faire." (Add. MSS., 17677, xx, ff. 190 *verso*, 198 *verso*.)

war as a principal. By acceding to the request the Emperor would put England under an obligation to him, and convince her that her well-being depended upon his. The Emperor would also put the Princess Anne under an obligation to him, and thereby compel her, should the King die during the war, to intervene with all her power in the Emperor's interest. Wratislaw maintained that, on the contrary, French policy would make use of such an article to embroil the Emperor with the Papacy and all the Catholic Powers. Marlborough answered that the matter had nothing to do with religion. The succession in England had previously been determined by legislation; the Emperor need only bind himself not to admit that France could break the laws of England. Care would be taken so to frame the article as not to touch the religious question.[1]

An agreement was ultimately reached accordingly.

Wratislaw on February 19 had a lengthy conversation with William III which left him in perplexity. He asked Marlborough confidentially the next day for a more precise explanation of what was troubling the King.

Marlborough said, "The King is greatly perturbed as to the possibility of a French attack in full force on Holland. Further he wants a vigorous campaign on all sides, the sight of which may maintain the readiness of the republic to continue to bear its heavy burden. I therefore strongly advise against a detachment to Naples. But if this cannot be dropped I say to you—in the strictest confidence and without the previous knowledge of the King—that the strengthening of the army of Prince Eugene must not be neglected. For from the general point of view it would be less harmful for the King to lose some battle than for Prince Eugene to be overthrown. If this reinforcement [of Prince Eugene] is by auxiliary troops the King would have little to complain of. But he requires the actual Imperial forces to be on the Rhine, so as to be assured on the one hand that the King of the Romans (Joseph) will appear in the field, and on the other that the Emperor, and not the [German] Princes, is master in the empire."[2]

This advice is curious. Marlborough was himself almost certain to command in the north, and yet he recognizes that a defeat there would do less harm to the common cause than the destruction of Prince Eugene in the south, and does not hesitate to weaken the main theatre for the sake of the wisest general dispositions.

We have one more impression of him on the eve of his power.

[1] Wratislaw's report from London of January 13/24, 1702; translated from Klopp, ix, 457.

[2] Wratislaw's report from London of Feb. 24/March 7, 1702; translated from Klopp, ix, 479.

The gathering together of so many threads and resources in the hands of a single man of known abilities and ambition aroused fierce jealousies in that world of proud magnates; and all foresaw that the King's death and the accession of Anne would make Marlborough virtual master of England. To the Tories this was not unwelcome. They thought they saw in it the ascendancy of their party. For this very reason the Whigs were alarmed. Although they realized that Marlborough held the Whig view of foreign policy, although his wife was an ardent Whig, although Sunderland probably laboured to reassure them, yet the Whigs could not regard the arrival of Marlborough at the supreme direction of affairs as other than the triumph of a Tory chief serving a Tory Queen. Some of their leaders entertained the idea of passing over the Princess Anne and of bringing the Elector of Hanover to the throne. The Dukes of Bolton and Newcastle pressed Lord Dartmouth to join in such a plot. Marlborough, whose sources of information were extensive, heard of this. He questioned Dartmouth, the son of his old friend Legge, who replied that he knew of the proposal, but did not regard it seriously. Marlborough declared that the plot existed, and, with a fierce flash unusual in him, exclaimed, "But, by God, if ever they attempt it, we would walk over their bellies!"[1] This unwonted violence may well have been calculated. He was so situated that he could certainly have used the Army as well as the Tory Party to resist any such design, and he no doubt wished this to be well understood. The prize long awaited was near, and he would not be baulked of it.

The second Grand Alliance now formed must have seemed a desperate venture to those whose minds were seared by the ill-fortune of William's eight-years' war. How vain had been that struggle! How hard to gain any advantage over the mighty central power of France! Hardly a trophy had been won from all that bitter toil. France, single-handed, had fought Europe and emerged wearied but unbeaten. In the six years of peace she had regained without a shot fired all the fortresses and territory so stubbornly disputed. But now the widest empire in the world was withdrawn from the Alliance and added to the resources of its antagonists. Spain had changed sides, and with Spain not only the Indies, South America, and the whole of Italy, but the cockpit of Europe —Belgium and Luxembourg—and even Portugal. Savoy, the

[1] Burnet, v, 540 *n.*

deserter, still rested with France. Cologne was also now a French ally. Bavaria, constant to the end in the last war, was to be with France in the new struggle. The Maritime Powers had scarcely a friendly port beyond their coasts. The New World was almost barred against them. The Mediterranean had become in effect a French lake. South of Plymouth no fortified harbour lay open to their ships. They had their superior fleets, but no bases which would carry them to the inland sea. On land the whole Dutch barrier had passed into French hands. Instead of being the rampart of Holland, it had become the sallyport of France. Louis, occupying the Archbishoprics of Cologne and Trèves, was master of the Meuse and of the Lower Rhine. He held all the Channel ports, and had entrenched himself from Namur through Antwerp to the sea. His armies ranged through the region east of the Meuse to the Dutch frontier. His winter dispositions disclosed his intention in the spring campaign to renew the invasion of Holland along the same routes which had led almost to its subjugation in 1672. A terrible front of fortresses, bristling with cannon, crammed with troops and supplies, betokened the approaching onslaught. The Dutch cowered behind inundations and their remaining strongholds. Lastly, the transference of Bavaria to the side of France laid the very heart of the Empire open to French invasion. The Hungarians were still in revolt, and the Turks once more afoot. In every element of strategy by sea or by land, as well as in the extent of territory and population, Louis was twice as strong at the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession as he had been at the Peace of Ryswick. One final adverse contrast must be noticed. The Papacy had changed sides. Clement XI had abandoned the policy of Innocent XI. He espoused the cause of the Great King. He sent his congratulations to Philip V, and granted him subsidies from Spanish ecclesiastical property. He lived to repent his error. The scale of the new war was turned by the genius of one man. One single will outweighed all these fearful inequalities, and built out of the halved and defeated fragments of William's wars a structure of surpassing success under the leadership of England.

> In the debates of the English Parliament, in the councils of the English Ministers, in the plenipotentiary powers of the English Ambassadors and in the daily commands of the English general is contained the sum of the political history of the War of the Spanish Succession.[1]

[1] Carl von Noorden, *Europäische Geschichte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* Einleitung.

"The little gentleman in black velvet," the hero for a spell of so many enthusiastic toasts, now intervened. On February 20, the day after his conversation with Wratislaw, William was riding in the park round Hampton Court on Sorrel, a favourite horse said to have once belonged to Sir John Fenwick. Sorrel stumbled in the the new workings of a mole, and the King was thrown. The broken collar-bone might well have mended, but in his failing health the accident opened the door to a troop of lurking foes. Complications set in, and after a fortnight it was evident to him and to all who saw him that death was at hand. He transacted business to the end. His interest in the world drama for which he had set the stage, on which the curtain was about to rise, lighted his mind as the shadows closed upon him. He received the reports of his gathering armies and followed the business of both his Parliaments. He grieved to quit the themes and combinations which had been the labour and the passion of his life. They were now approaching their dread climax. But he must go. Mr Valiant had his summons. "My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder."[1] He had his consolation. He saw with eagle eye the approach of a reign and Government in England which would maintain the cause in which his strength had been spent. He saw the only man to whom in war or policy, in the intricate convolutions of European diplomacy, in the party turmoil of England, or amid the hazards of the battlefield, he could bequeath the awful yet unescapable task. He had made his preparations deliberately to pass his leadership to a new champion of the Protestant faith and the liberties of Europe. In his last years he had woven Marlborough into the whole texture of his combinations and policy. In his last hours he commended him to his successor as the fittest man in the realm to guide her councils and lead her armies. William died at fifty-two worn out by his labours. Marlborough at the same age strode forward upon those ten years of unbroken victory with which our future chapters will be mainly concerned.

[1] *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

VOLUME TWO

Volume Two

PREFACE

WHEREAS the records of Marlborough's earlier life are singularly scanty, we now enter a period where information is baffling because of its abundance. Lediard's admirable biography presents a continuous account of all the campaigns told with spirit, in detail, and well documented. Archdeacon Coxe, writing in 1818–19, had access to all the Blenheim archives that were then known, and produced a comprehensive and monumental work in which large numbers of the personal letters of Marlborough and of his wife, as well as of Queen Anne and many other correspondents unknown to Lediard, were freely quoted. In 1842 a new discovery was made in remarkable circumstances. The sixth Duke of Marlborough in the course of repairing Blenheim built a muniment-room, and collected all the family papers in it. Some of these papers had been stored in Hensington House, at the gates of Blenheim Park, in a record-room used by former stewards. In this room were three large chests, unlocked, placed one upon another, which no one had troubled to open in living memory. The Duke's solicitor, a Mr Whateley, was more curious. Although he was told that they contained nothing but useless accounts, he continued to pry. The first two chests were filled with old militia accounts and other papers of no importance, but in the third chest, which was undermost, "I found eighteen folio books bound in vellum." These books contained the dispatches and official or secret letters written by John Churchill to the princes of the Grand Alliance; to the Ambassadors and agents of the various states; to the Ministers of the English Crown; to the leaders, agents, and generals of the Dutch Republic; and to the hostile commanders, during the whole of his ten campaigns.

His descendant was not unworthy of this amazing treasure-trove. He entrusted the editing and publishing of the papers to General Sir George Murray, one of Wellington's Peninsular officers, who was at that time Master-General of the Ordnance. Three years later Murray published the greater part of this material, which might so easily have been consigned as rubbish to the flames, in five large,

closely printed octavo volumes, comprising considerably over a million words. This enormous collection of original documents is called *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712.* It also contains the frequent bulletins of the Duke's armies in the field, and affords a detailed record of the military operations as they actually occurred. A further examination of the Blenheim papers during the last five years has revealed a large number of letters of great historic interest which either escaped Coxe's notice or were excluded from his history for want of space. Among these are the long series of holograph letters written by him to his two most profound intimates, Godolphin and Sarah. They reveal the personality of Marlborough, his inward hopes and fears, his secret thoughts, in a degree never before achieved; and they tell, in his own words, the story of his greatest enterprises far better than his ponderous official correspondence, conducted in the main by the immense abilities and labours of Cardonnel. In this work I have reprinted from Coxe only those documents which are essential to the story, and have used the dispatches only as a guide. These two copious sources, together with Lediard, should be resorted to by students to confirm, explain, and supplement what is written here. I have sought rather to throw a new light upon Marlborough's character and toils by using whenever possible his ownwords which have remained up till now unknown, written under stress of events from camps and quarters to those who were dearest to him and were also his most trusted colleagues.

No one can read the whole mass of the letters which Marlborough either wrote, dictated, or signed personally without being astounded at the mental and physical energy which it attests. The entire range of European affairs, all the intricate personal relations of the heads of States and Governments, all the vital connexions with Holland, with the Empire, with Prussia, with the Archduke Charles, and with a score of minor potentates, all the anxious shifting combinations of English politics, all the ceremonious usage which surrounded the Queen, her husband, and her Court, are disposed of day after day by a general manœuvring equal or smaller forces in closest contact with a redoubtable enemy, who often might engage in a decisive battle "at no more than one hour's notice." After twelve or fourteen hours in the saddle on the long reconnaissances often under cannon-fire; after endless inspections of troops in camp and garrison; after ceaseless calculations about food and supplies, and all the anxieties of direct command in war, Marlborough would

reach his tent and conduct the foreign policy of England, decide the main issues of its Cabinet, and of party politics at home. He thought for all, he acted for all. But when the longest day was done, and its hours of hazard had faded into the night, it was not seldom that he wrote his letter to his beloved Sarah, or to his great colleague and lifelong friend, Godolphin. It is these most interesting simple records, never meant for any eye but those to which they were addressed, that tell his tale in its most compulsive form, and vindicate alike the greatness, warmth, and virtue of his nature.

But while the wars of Marlborough are set forth by his bulletins in full and continuous detail, we are singularly lacking in stories of his campaigns from those who served in them. The age of military diarists and memoir-writers had not begun. Very few officers on either side who fought in those brave armies have left records which have come down to us. There is, of course, in the first place the Journal of Marlborough's Chaplain, Dr Francis Hare, which covers the campaign of 1704. This journal further contains eight long letters describing the campaign of 1705 which have not been published. There is the handful of letters of Colonel Cranstoun, of the Cameronians, in the Bath Papers, and the few but vivid letters of Lord Orkney. There are a few letters of Captain Richard Pope, of the 7th Dragoon Guards. Samuel Noyes, chaplain to Orkney's Regiment, has left a hitherto unpublished diary of 1705 and 1706, now in the possession of his descendants. A number of Cardonnel's letters have recently been acquired by the British Museum, while a series of Cadogan's letters, chiefly covering the later years, has also been put at my disposal by the Hon. Edward Cadogan. There is the journal of Colonel Blackadder, which, as has been well said, tells us more about the state of his soul than the course of the war. But it would be difficult to paint a lively picture of these memorable campaigns were it not for three diarists who all served throughout with the Royal Regiment of Ireland. None of them published anything in his lifetime. Their writings lay forgotten in family chests. It was only in another generation and under the impulse of another war that they were printed. The accounts of Colonel, afterwards Major-General, Kane and Captain Robert Parker are in the main one. In page after page they follow each other textually. It would seem that they kept a joint regimental record which each embellished, expanded, or corrected for his own version. The third diarist, Sergeant John Millner, has left us a well-written soldierly account, especially valuable for its detail of marches, camps, and numbers.

Captain Robert Parker was a Protestant gentleman from Kilkenny whose heart in early youth was turned to a military life. He fought in all the campaigns of King William both in Ireland and in Flanders. He was now to serve almost continuously through the second great European war under Marlborough. His book is the more valuable because it was written with no thought of publication, and is singular for the aptness and pith of its style. It was penned only as a record for his friends. It lay neglected for many years after his death, and was published by his son in 1746, as a stimulus, according to the preface, for our army then fighting the French in the War of the Austrian Succession. The captain—for he rose no higher—tells us that he had no reason to like Marlborough, whom he often saw, but to whom apparently he never spoke, and who had, as he thought unjustly (though he did not blame him), passed him over for promotion. Yet if we had to choose one single record of Marlborough's campaigns and of his personality we might well be content with the journals of this marching captain, whose grasp not only of the war, but of the great causes which stirred the world, so far exceeded his station. The testimony of ordinary regimental officers is often a truer guide to the qualities of generals than the inscriptions on their monuments. We shall often recur to him as we tramp the fields of Flanders behind "the surly drums."

We also owe a debt to Ailesbury, whom we have already met in the personal circle around King Charles and King James, and whose troubles during the trial of Sir John Fenwick have been mentioned. This lord had been exiled for Jacobitism during the late King's reign, and William had left a written direction that he should never be allowed to return to England. We find him therefore in the Low Countries, a figure of affluence and social distinction. He had been graciously received by Louis XIV, and shortly before the actual outbreak of the war had been hospitably entertained by the French in their camps in Belgium and at their headquarters in Liége. Indeed, flattering proposals had been made to him to throw in his lot with the Court of Saint-Germains and the party of the Two Crowns. But the old Earl had an English heart, and as the armies gathered and fighting drew near he detached himself from his French hosts with many frank explanations, which were accepted in good part, and betook himself within the Dutch lines. Henceforward Ailesbury was an agreeable figure in the society behind the front. Marlborough's relations with him were charac-

teristic. Ailesbury longed to return home, and perpetually entreated Marlborough to enable him to do so. As he was a banished man who steadfastly refused to take the Abjuration Oath, his return would have embarrassed the Government by laying them open to accusations of favouring the Jacobites. "So in plain English I was sacrificed out of State policy and for no other reason, and which lasted so very many years." Marlborough liked the poor Earl and sympathized with him, and actually, as a letter at Blenheim reveals, played fairy godfather at his daughter's marriage, but he had no wish to have the Government involved on his account. He treated him always with a personal courtesy and tenderness which captivated, if it did not console, the exile. Travelling to and from the army, he often dined with him and his amiable Belgian second wife, and paid him any small attention or service that was possible; but he never let him go home. On one occasion, when Ailesbury in exasperation omitted to call upon the Commander-in-Chief, it was Marlborough's part the next day to visit him at his house and take great pains to soothe him. But on the public issue he was adamant. Thus for a series of years we have a number of contacts between these two former courtiers of Charles II, which Ailesbury in his *Memoirs* has set in a light that brings them near to us.

There are scores of histories of Marlborough in the English language, but no modern English work on this subject can compete with Taylor's *Wars of Marlborough*. This writer devoted the closing decade of his life to the most detailed study of the campaigns, which he invested with a colour and movement that lose nothing from his obvious admiration for his hero.

It is, however, the Continental historians who give the most complete picture of this world war, and who reveal upon a European background the dominating part which England played under Marlborough's leadership. The standard French history by Pelet unrolls the panorama as it appeared from Versailles. The original documents of the highest consequence which are presented in this long series of massive volumes will repay the reader, apart altogether from the valuable comments by which they are pointed. The *Histoire de Jean Churchill*, by Madgett, assisted by the Abbé Dutems, is of interest because it was written by the direction and under the supervision of Napoleon, whose appreciation of Marlborough as a soldier was profound.

The Austrian Catholic historian Klopp in *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart* has bequeathed us a monumental work. For twenty years he

trailed through the archives of Europe tormented by the inherent contradictions of his theme. As an Austrian patriot he championed the Empire, its statesmen, and its generals. As a convert to Rome his heart lay with the house of Stuart in exile at Saint-Germains. In fourteen volumes still preserved in Continental libraries he recorded his dislike of Marlborough as a foreigner and a Protestant. He can hardly bring himself to recount his victories. Blenheim was an accident caused by some French cavalry squadrons being pushed into the Danube and leaving their infantry cut off behind them. Ramillies, to which he devotes one paragraph in several thousand pages, was occasioned by a change of the wind. On the other hand, whole chapters are devoted to mocking at the correspondence about Marlborough's principality, or proving him unfair in his treatment of the Imperial commander, Prince Louis of Baden. A whine and drone of baffled spite arises from these wearisome, laborious chronicles; but more curious still is Klopp's lack of proportion in judging events and of responsibility to his country's cause. Never for one moment does he perceive that but for the life-effort and tireless scheming of Marlborough the whole structure which resisted Louis XIV would have fallen to pieces. If the cannon-ball at Blenheim or the sabre-cut at Elixem, or any one of the hundred chances amid which Marlborough rode from day to day upon his duty, had removed him from the scene, the driving-force of the coalition was dead. His will and his craft alone drew the English, the Dutch, and the German states to the rescue of the Empire upon the Danube. His authority and comprehension sought to marshal an army upon the Moselle which might have dictated peace. Whenever he is for the time frustrated, the poor Klopp, fit scribe for an Empire which has sunk in the abyss, can only clap incontinent hands. Yet Marlborough had but to relax his efforts, so strenuous and intense year after year, for the Dutch, with all their wealth and armed power, to fall back eagerly, thankfully, behind their own fortress-barrier, and for England to wash her hands of Continental entanglements and blithely pursue trade and plantations across the seas. And that would have entailed the ruin of both the causes to which Klopp seems to bear a thin but persistent allegiance. The Holy Roman Empire would have crumbled to pieces before its time, and Gallican Catholicism would have dominated the Papacy.

The race of Klopps is not extinct in modern days, but few of them make so acceptable an apology for their existence as this writer with his industry in unearthing and transcribing documents and

with his magpie shrewdness in picking out all sorts of glittering novelties from among the dusty ruins of the past.

The German von Noorden is an authority of equal diligence, but with far greater discernment and literary power. His comprehension of English statesmen and politics is upon the highest level, and he is equally master of the European scene. An immense mass of original documents collected by the Dutch historian Lamberty affords a quarry in which very few English picks have clinked. But probably the most valuable work is the Austrian official history, the *Feldzüge des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen.*[1] I was fortunate enough by advertising in Germany to procure a copy of this very rare book, which contains so many of the original secret dispatches of Prince Eugene, Wratislaw, and other high personages written from the headquarters of the armies, and of the Imperial replies, as well as military comments based upon intimate knowledge of the ground and of the conditions of the operations.

I mention these few authorities from among the host of witnesses whose names and works will be found in the appended bibliography.

In my former volume I have dealt with the first fifty-two years of Marlborough's life and traced his rise under three successive sovereigns to the general recognition that he was the leading Englishman in the realm. The crimson thread of his biography has already in the last year of King William broadened into English history. In the reign of Queen Anne it spreads beyond our own annals, and enters, often decisively, during ten tremendous years into the strange, gigantic story of Europe.

Upon this stage we see Marlborough as an Olympian figure making head against innumerable difficulties and opponents in every quarter, and preserving by his genius and his exploits the religious and civil liberties of England and of Europe against French domination in Church and State. Certainly he is revealed by his letters, by every reported utterance, and by his deeds, as a majestic, sagacious, benignant personality, making allowances for everybody, enduring every vexation with incredible patience, taking all the burdens upon his own shoulders, tirelessly contriving and compelling victory, running all risks and always ready, as he phrased it, to die "for Queen and country."

During the four years (1702–1705) covered by the present volume, Marlborough led England as Captain-General and, with

[1] Commissioned by the Imperial General Staff, 1871; vol. i appeared in 1876.

Godolphin, as virtual Prime Minister. He conducted by personal negotiation with sovereigns and potentates the essentials of England's foreign policy. He was the mainspring of the Grand Alliance and its many signatory States. His tent or headquarters were the clearing-house for all the ceaseless disputes and tangles of the whole confederacy against Louis XIV. He was the central link on which everything was fastened. He supplied whatever there was of unity of command, of cohesion and design. We know from our own experience the difficulties of achieving these elements of success. His life was a ceaseless triple struggle, first to preserve the political foundation in England which would enable her to dominate the Continental war; secondly, to procure effective military action from the crowd of discordant, jealous, and often incompetent or lukewarm allies; and thirdly—and this was the easiest part—to beat the French in the field. Nothing like this concentration of business and effective action upon a single man had ever been seen before in Europe, or was soon to be seen again. King William III had filled the diplomatic and political spheres with kingly authority; but he had not the military genius which could compel the turbulent course of war. Frederick the Great possessed military gifts of the first order; but for all his sovereignty he did not preside over affairs comparable in their width and complexity to the domain of Marlborough. It is not till we reach Napoleon, the Emperor-statesman-captain, that we see this threefold combination of functions—military, political, and diplomatic—which was Marlborough's sphere, applied again upon a Continental scale.

Never have such influence and such power been brought to bear upon Europe by any man not possessing a kingly title. Marlborough was but a subject—a "private man," as Bolingbroke calls him. He moved and acted in an aristocratic period, when the world was still set in a formal frame. To pretend that the triumphs of England in the age of Anne were the sole work of Marlborough would be an exaggeration. But it would only be an exaggeration. Had he been given the power to design and command which Frederick and Napoleon exercised so fully, there is little doubt, apart from the chances of his being killed in battle, that he would have brought the world war of the eighteenth century to a decisive, absolute victory before the end of the period which this volume describes.

His powers were nevertheless very varied and extensive. Monographs could be written about the relations of Marlborough and

Queen Anne; on his connexion with the friend of his life, Godolphin; on his military brotherhood with Eugene, a comradeship unmatched in the annals of war between commanders of equal fame and capacity; on his relations with the Grand Pensionary Heinsius and with Wratislaw, the plenipotentiary of the Emperor. These were the five great personalities with whom and through whom he acted. Beyond them and beneath them lay a throng of kings, princes, commanders, ambassadors, and politicians, many of whom upon occasions came to the centre of affairs. But these five stand out throughout the whole period in the supreme circle of those with whom he had continually to work.

Behind him was his own family and his own military family. First stood his beloved wife, and in a sense Cabinet colleague, Sarah, whose intimate relations with the Queen at times vastly helped and at others vastly hindered harmonious action. He himself was not only Captain-General of the British Army and its commander in the field, he was also the Master-General of the Ordnance, which gave him complete control over all those services of munitions and supplies upon which the army lives. Through Godolphin as Lord Treasurer he was sure of the finances. His brother George Churchill, advising his friend the Prince of Denmark, controlled for the first six years the Board of Admiralty. His other brother, Charles Churchill, a good, competent soldier, commanded the English infantry. Always there was his right-hand man, Cadogan, a devoted, unswerving adherent who seems to have combined the functions of Chief of the Staff and Quartermaster-General in the field with those of principal intelligence and reconnoitring officer. Cadogan was very often Marlborough's eye. He went out in advance to see the situation for himself and to report to his chief, who knew he could act upon what Cadogan said was true. Hard by Marlborough's tent or coach was always Cardonnel, who made it possible for him to conduct from his constantly moving headquarters the diplomacy and politics of the Grand Alliance. And then there was Dr Hare, already mentioned, who followed the Duke in all the campaigns and actions, administered the sacrament before the battle, and was at hand to perform the last offices in case some sabre-cut or cannon-ball laid his leader low. Dr Hare was besides what was then called a 'journalist.' He kept the staff diary of the army, assisted Cardonnel with the bulletins, which were remarkably good reading, and much more informing than the ones we used to have in the Great War; and he also probably helped in composing the communiqués on

controversial issues which were sometimes launched, or allowed to leak out by calculated indiscretion from nowhere in particular.

Such, in brief, is the personal apparatus by which Marlborough was surrounded and through which he addressed himself to Europe and moved the armies against the enemy. It is remarkable and revealing, so far as Marlborough's character is concerned, that practically none of this entourage was altered during the ten campaigns. George Churchill, indeed, had to be turned out of the Admiralty in 1708, but all the others went through the whole course with Marlborough, shared his marches and dangers, shared his triumphs, and also his misfortunes and ill-usage at the end. It is quite true that the Duke was not popular with his leading contemporaries. He followed his own hard maxim, "It is best to have to do with as few people as possible." But those who knew him best and through whom he worked held to him always through thick and thin, and he for his part never found any occasion to change his opinion of them.

This volume closes at a moment when Marlborough's place among the greatest captains of history was still disputed. Although in 1704 on Blenheim field he had rescued the Empire from ruin and the Grand Alliance from collapse, the fruits of victory were largely cast away by the jealousies of the allies and the fatal caution of the Dutch in 1705; and it was possible for rivals and detractors to maintain that he was an imprudent, unorthodox general with one stroke of luck. His authority was still flouted by other allied commanders; his judgment was still trammelled by endless councils of war. Although the instinct of both the English and the Dutch peoples acclaimed him as their champion, he was beset on all sides by a host of critical functionaries and personages. Blenheim had aroused the spirit of the English to a degree of warlike enthusiasm scarcely ever equalled in our records. But other proofs were needed before Marlborough obtained that plenary power at the head of his armies which has always been deemed indispensable to success. By the time his authority in the field was no longer challenged, the basis of his political power at home had been undermined. But to recount this curious double process must be the task of a final volume.

I have been greatly helped in unravelling the four campaigns

described in this volume by Colonel R. P. Pakenham-Walsh, who has during the last five years made a detailed study of them in their technical aspects. Together we have visited the battlefields and traversed the marches, and I have enjoyed the advantage of his excellent professional opinion. The greatest pains have been taken with the diagrams and maps which illustrate most of the situations. If the reader will but glance at them as they occur page after page he will find no difficulty in understanding what happened. Commander J. H. Owen, R.N., has assisted me in naval matters.

I must renew my thanks to all of those who have so kindly allowed me to reproduce pictures and portraits in their possession, and also to those who have placed original documents at my disposal. I make my acknowledgments in every case.

I had looked forward to presenting this volume, like its forerunner, to my cousin, the late Duke of Marlborough. His interest in the story was keen, and without his ardent co-operation and the freedom of the Blenheim archives which he accorded me for so many years my task would never have been thus far accomplished. It is with lasting sorrow that I recall in these pages the breaking by death of a lifetime's friendship.

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

CHARTWELL
WESTERHAM
August 13, 1934

Chapter One

THE SUNSHINE DAY

1702—MARCH

THE accession of a sovereign is rightfully an occasion for rejoicing; but seldom has a great and virtuous prince been so little mourned as King William III. The long foreign compression of his reign was over. A personality always dominating and active, but never likable, was gone. A queer, unnatural interlude in English history had reached its end. Bishops and courtiers who watched the couch upon which William of Orange gasped and choked on his journey into silence vied with each other in sending or carrying accurate bulletins of his death-agony to his successor. In the morning of March 8 Anne had become the ruler of the three kingdoms. There was a sigh of relief throughout the capital, and then, with scarcely the pause which decorum enjoined, a very general jubilation for Her Majesty Queen Anne.

Little cause had she or her friends, the high personages with whom we are concerned, to cherish the memory of William. Anne had been at one time almost persecuted by him, often vexed in petty ways, and always excluded from the slightest share in public affairs. She "should not," he had reminded her, "be Queen before her time."[1] He had treated her husband with cordial, unspoken contempt. Marlborough, though in the end handed Elijah's mantle, had been imprisoned in his reign and denied a fair part in the war while he was in his military prime. Godolphin, who stood next to Marlborough in experience and authority, had been newly driven from office as the result of the wanton dissolution of 1701. All these three, certainly Anne and Marlborough, were conscious of the lifting of a great weight. The whole of the Tories, smarting from their recent but partial defeat, reviled the late King's memory, and the Whigs were deeply conscious of the national reaction against him and all his works.

But far beyond the bounds of the ruling political circles there was satisfaction throughout the country at the disappearance of an

[1] Vol. I, p. 432.

alien ruler who, though he had faithfully discharged his duties to England, had scarcely troubled to conceal his dislike for her and his preference for his native land. Dignified ceremonial but no public funeral was accorded to the corpse of the world-famous prince by the island he had saved. His Dutch favourites—Bentinck, Keppel, and the rest—were brushed out of English affairs. We shall meet them in Holland. All the politics of his reign were searchingly called in question. Soon seven commissioners from the Tory Opposition, "the hottest men in the House, who had raised as well as kept up the clamour with the greatest earnestness," will be appointed to examine his accounts and finances. The addresses which from all parts of the country saluted Queen Anne made little or even slighting reference to his services. Although a more correct, if frigid, demeanour was observed by the Court, and the customary verbal tributes were paid, the vindication of King William's memory was left to history, which has not failed him.

The Privy Council repaired to the new Queen, and for the first time her subjects heard in official declarations that melodious, well-trained voice which always charmed and often thrilled. She spoke of the Protestant Succession, of the Church of England, of resistance to France, of her resolve to do her constitutional duty and to fulfil the obligations entered into by her predecessor for the common good of Europe. She was acclaimed. By the time she met the Houses of Parliament on March 11 the feeling of the nation was revealed to the London world. We are told that the Queen repeated "more copiously" to Parliament what she had said to the Privy Council. But there were some significant additions. "I know my own heart to be entirely English," she declared, and added in marked and challenging repetition of her father that "you shall always find me a strict and religious observer of my word."[1] The royal attire was also deemed remarkable. She wore a robe of red velvet lined with ermine and edged with gold galloon, and over it a royal mantle of the same materials, and around her neck a heavy gold chain with the badge of St George hanging on her bosom. Upon Anne's head was the red velvet cap surmounted by the crown of England. On her left arm she bore the ribbon of the Garter. It was said that she had used a portrait of Queen Elizabeth as a model.[2] The impression

[1] *Parliamentary History of England* (Hansard), edited by William Cobbett and J. Wright, vi (1810), 5.

[2] Dispatches of Wratislaw (the Imperial Ambassador Extraordinary) and Hoffmann (the Imperial Minister Resident in London), March 11.

produced by her declarations, her voice, and her appearance was profound. Many, taking the cue, spoke of a second Queen Elizabeth, and felt the presage of great days to come.

To Marlborough belongs the responsibility for the impulse given to the whole policy of the State and for the note struck by Queen Anne. In these first momentous hours and days he was not only the chief but the sole guide of the Queen, and the decisions to which he obtained her assent shaped the future. Anne relied on Marlborough. Moreover, in the main she agreed with him. She liked his innate Toryism. She admired his strong religious strain. His high, tolerant outlook upon the fierce factions of the times, his desire for national unity, all seemed to her to harmonize with her own duties as sovereign. There was the wise, great, and good man who had always stood by her; the captain who had steered her ship through so many storms and shoals, who always knew what to do, and never made a mistake. He would protect her from "the mercyless men of both parties." He understood all about Europe and this terrible war into which she must now plunge. And was he not also the husband of her dearest personal friend? So Queen Anne and her ablest subject, the man whom she knew best and liked and trusted most, sat down together to bring prosperity and glory to the realm.

Marlborough's ascendancy was well received at home and in friendly states abroad. In spite of some sneers he was recognized as the outstanding Englishman, on whom the Queen would rightly bestow her favour, even if long service and friendship had not made this natural. Both parties accepted him for his gifts, and for a time because he stood above their warfare. The foreign envoys and agents were from the beginning deeply impressed with his qualities. "The greatest consolation in this confusion," wrote Wratislaw on the day of the demise, "is that Marlborough is fully informed of the whole position and by reason of his credit with the Queen can do everything."[1] Others dwelt upon his honesty and financial strictness. "There is a general conviction," wrote L'Hermitage, "of Marlborough being a very clever man whose character is honest, simple and conciliatory, and whose whole interest is in making things go well"[2]; and Bonet a little later, "Milord Marlborough, the 'grand ministre,' is a great lover of order, so that people promise themselves that the finances will be strictly regulated."[3]

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch, March 8, 1702.
[2] L'Hermitage (Dutch Agent in London), March 17, 1702.
[3] Bonet (Prussian Minister Resident), April 10, 1702.

It was well understood in the Army that if Marlborough had the power he would pursue unswervingly the Protestant and warlike foreign policy of King William III. It is curious how these impressions communicated themselves to persons of high character in military discipline but far removed from politics or the Court. Captain John Blackadder, of the Cameronian Regiment, was, like his father, a man of iron, if iron can be so strong. According to our records, where religion, honour, or patriotism were concerned neither ever blenched under the malice of domestic government or the fire of the foreign enemy. Both sustained without any perceptible sign of weakness, the one in his pulpit or in proscribed conventicles, the other in the forefront of British battles, every pressure, violent or prolonged, that man may be born to endure. The father was dead. He had expired in 1686 upon the Bass Rock after four years of rigorous imprisonment. But the son remained to plead with his sword in a gallant regiment the causes to whose service he conceived himself born. When Captain Blackadder heard of William's death he was grieved to the roots of his being. His faith sustained him, and he wrote in his diary on March 12:

> But the same God who raised up for us a Moses to bring us out of Egypt and the house of bondage sits at the helm still, and can, after him, raise up a Joshua to perfect the deliverance, and lead his people into the promised land.[1]

The new reign opened amid a blaze of loyalty. It was the "sunshine day" for which the Princess Anne had waited with placid attention. In her mind were a number of particular things she had long wished but lacked the power to do. She hastened to appoint her husband Generalissimo and Lord High Admiral. She made the Earl of Marlborough Captain-General of her armies at home and abroad. More than ten years had passed since she had begged in vain a Garter for him from William. She was now, on the fifth day of her reign, able to confer it herself. For nearly ten years also Henry Sidney, now Lord Romney, had enjoyed by William's favouritism the lucrative position of Quartermaster, or Master-General of the Ordnance, which Marlborough had needed and too much desired. Upon the death of his patron Sidney was stripped of his unmerited, though not ill-borne, advantages, and Marlborough put in his stead. An emblem from the Sidney family arms, the Broad Arrow, has, however, left its mark upon our country.

[1] A. Crichton, *Life and Diary of Lieutenant-Colonel J. Blackadder* (1824), p. 174.

At every point we see intermingled the policy of Marlborough and the wishes of the Queen. It was the Queen's wish to load him and his wife with honours and wealth; and we need not suppose that either of the recipients made much objection. The Queen had old friends to honour and old scores to pay. The reader will remember that young Lord Mulgrave who had courted her with poems in the jovial days of Charles II and been sent in a leaky frigate to Tangier for his presumption. Mulgrave—Normanby he had become—was soon to be appointed Lord Privy Seal and thereafter Duke of Buckingham. Thus romance received a belated dividend with compound interest. Wharton, William's Comptroller of the Household, was made to surrender his staff of office to his successor in the Queen's presence by her express arrangement because she disapproved of his licentious and ungodly modes of life and speech. The aged Earl of Macclesfield nearly a quarter of a century before had supported his brother in accusing Anne's father, afterwards James II, of responsibility for the suicide of Essex in the Tower. He was incontinently turned out of office. In the making of bishops and the preferment of all clergymen the Queen was deeply interested. She advanced to such vacancies as occurred—for longevity is fashionable in ecclesiastical hierarchies—zealous High Churchmen. She dealt with the Archbishop of York, Dr Sharp, who was High, rather than with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Tenison, who was Broad. She even endeavoured to persuade Bishop Ken, the Non-juror, whose conscientious convictions challenged her sovereign right, to resume his spiritual office. In all this both in likes and prejudice the Queen's will and pleasure were made manifest.

Anne gratified many special desires. Marlborough had one general purpose. No sooner had the Queen met the Privy Council on March 8 than he informed the Imperial Ambassador, Wratislaw, that the Queen, like the late King, would support unswervingly the interests of the Emperor. He also authorized the Ambassador to make this public by every channel. That night he sent a personal message of the same character to the Grand Pensionary of Holland.[1] Wratislaw seems to have urged Marlborough to go to The Hague forthwith himself. For the moment this was impossible. He could not leave the Queen. But after the Queen had met Parliament and announced the broad lines of her policy Marlborough turned immediately to Holland. On the 13th he visited Wratislaw again,

[1] See von Noorden, *Europäische Geschichte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (1870), i. 193.

bringing Godolphin with him.[1] Marlborough told the Ambassador that earlier in the day he had been appointed Captain-General of the English forces, and that in the evening the Order of the Garter would be conferred on him. He announced that no official notification of the accession would be made to the King of France; and that the Queen had instructed him to proceed as soon as possible to The Hague. If the wind were favourable he would start the next day. Lord Godolphin would act for him in all matters during his absence, and Wratislaw should have recourse to him. As Godolphin was not yet a Minister the arrangement was for the moment informal. It was none the less effective. Sarah was the link between Godolphin and the Queen. Mrs Freeman reported to Mrs Morley what Mr Montgomery—for so Anne called Lord Godolphin—mentioned in his talks with her. Never was the English Constitution found more flexible.

These events were watched by one who was by now no more than a profound observer. Sunderland, old and declining, read in his library at Althorp the Queen's Speech. He had also received a friendly message from Marlborough reassuring him about his pension under the new régime. Considering his kinsman's anger against him for having counselled William's unlucky dissolution of 1701, the token of amity must have been a sensible relief to this straggler from the reign of James II. He wrote him a mellow letter.

> Whatever coldness has been between us of late, I am sure on my side, and I believe on yours, was from thinking differently of the public; which, as it is at an end, so I dare confidently say it will never be again. To convince you of this, I need only tell you, that I wished all yesterday, that every article might be in the Queen's Speech, which, when the letters came, I found. This may appear vain, but it is true, and my wife can witness it.[2]

These sentences, proving that Sunderland had had no hand in the Speech, dispose of the report, so misleading to foreign historians, which Hoffmann made to Vienna, that Marlborough, Godolphin, *and Sunderland* would "form a triumvirate in the Ministry."[3] Sunderland had no longer any part in affairs, but Marlborough with a kindness which family ties may perhaps discount sought

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch, March 13.
[2] Coxe, *Memoirs of John, Duke of Marlborough* (second edition, 1820), i, 144.
[3] Hoffmann's dispatch, March 13; Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, x, 16.

to put him politically at his ease in the closing months of his life.[1]

Of all the wishes which Anne nourished on her accession none was more ardent than to make her dearly loved husband King Consort of England. It fell to Marlborough to persuade her that this could not be done. The whole impression which the Queen, no less than her counsellor, wished to give of an English reign would be destroyed by such a project, which Parliament would never have sanctioned. There remained the question whether King William's offices in Holland of Stadtholder and Captain-General might not be transferred by the Dutch to Prince George of Denmark. No doubt the Queen dwelt on this hope. Marlborough was still Ambassador and plenipotentiary to the Dutch Republic. It was natural that he should announce Queen Anne's accession to her ally. The Queen wished that he should see what could be done on the spot in her husband's interests. She even sent an autograph letter to the States-General proposing Prince George as the new Stadtholder. The States-General found after long thought no better answer than silence. For Marlborough himself the obvious and vital need was to gain control of the European situation and grip the Grand Alliance together; and this could only be done from The Hague.

The personal influence of Anne upon history has been much disputed. The modern impression of the important part she played is due to foreign rather than national historians. The portrait of a weak, feeble-minded, narrow being, managed by her female intimates or by Marlborough, has never been recognized abroad. Nor does it represent the character of one of the strongest personalities that have reigned in these islands. The politics of England, in fact, revolved around Queen Anne. Her intellect was limited, but her faith, her conscience, her principles, and her prejudices were for ten years a factor in the life of England and in the fortunes of Europe which held its own with the growing power of Parliament and the victories

[1] "The moral quality of these three personages," writes Klopp, "is sufficiently apparent from previous events. Even Godolphin, though not surrounded by such deep shadows as Sunderland or Marlborough, does not appear in an altogether favourable light. But if we put in the other scale their intellectual ability, the triumvirate represented the finest flower of contemporary English statesmanship, and that in the opinion of an unquestioned expert, King William III As, then, these three men combined to carry on his work and Queen Anne, whether fully aware or not of what she was doing, lent them the concurrence of the royal authority, the question might well be raised from the first in Versailles as to whether the death of William III, when he had once completed his work of the Grand Alliance, could still be regarded as a gain" (Klopp, x, 16). The argument is excellent, but the fact erroneous.

of Marlborough. She was a simple, brave, constant woman, and she formed a fairly stable pivot upon which the passions and the fortunes of the parties turned. Anne cared about some of the largest and some of the smallest things, and for the sake of these she was ready to make exertions and run risks which might shake the realm. Anne cared about the Church of England, the Tory Party, Marlborough, her faithful servant, guide, and champion, and Sarah, her dear bosom friend from childhood onward. Besides these she cared intensely about the glory of England, which mattered a great deal, and about her husband Prince George, who mattered very little except to her.

Nothing ever stirred her mind more deeply than her right and duty to wear the crown. At heart she was a Protestant-Jacobite. While in her person and in her policy she barred the return of the rightful heir, she embodied the claims of blood and affirmed the Divine Right of Kings. She reverenced the principles the overthrow of which had brought her the crown. But she did not mean to give up the crown. She desired to have it, to keep it, and to transmit it to an heir of her own body. There was therefore an innate discordance in the bosom of this virtuous and pious woman. She had grieved for her exiled father. She had sought his forgiveness. At the same time she had taken every step in her power to turn him out and keep him out. From the very beginning she had disputed the legitimacy of the Prince of Wales. We remember how she had written in June 1688, "I shall never now be satisfied whether the child be true or false. Maybe 'tis our brother. . . . Where one believes it, a thousand do not. For my part . . . I shall ever be of of the number of unbelievers." Like the England she typified so closely, she clung to the warming-pan. She held it between her and the pricks of conscience. But the warming-pan was wearing thin. By 1702 it was regarded throughout Europe as a fraud, and in good society in England as a salutary fiction. Anne could not escape the atmosphere which she breathed. But never for a moment even in her fullest self-revelations did she lay down her defence. Sarah wrote later on:

> When I saw she had such a partiality to those I knew to be Jacobites, I asked her one day whether she had a mind to give up her crown; for if it had been her conscience not to wear it, I do solemnly protest I would not have disturbed her, or struggled as I did. But she told me she was not sure the Prince of Wales was her brother; and that it was not practicable for him to come here without ruin to the religion and country.[1]

[1] October 29, 1709; Coxe, i. 142.

As the first of these objections seemed to weaken, Anne leaned the more heavily upon the practical and unanswerable force of the second. On the death of her father her stepmother, Mary of Modena, had written, on September 27, 1701, a challenging letter:

> I think myself indispensably obliged to defer no longer the acquainting you with a message which the best of men as well as the best of fathers left with me for you; some few days before his death he bid me find means to let you know that he forgave you all that's past from the bottom of his heart, and prayed to God to do so too, that he gave you his last blessing and prayed to God to convert your heart and confirm you in the resolution of repairing to his son the wrongs done to himself.[1]

Under this assault the Queen found sanctuary in the Church of England. Was she to betray that holy instrument to Roman idolatry? Was she to deliver her realm to civil war? Above all, was she, as Sarah put it bluntly, to give up her crown? No—a thousand times no! She would make the conscientious sacrifices which her public duty required, and she would take every step to make them effective. In their anger at Louis XIV's recognition of the Prince of Wales as rightful King, the English nation demanded that an article should be added to the treaties of the Grand Alliance pledging all its original members to the absolute exclusion of the Pretender. Anne was resolute for this additional article. She gave the fullest expression to her people's will, which was also her own. But at the same time she hated the Whigs for being the driving-force of such ideas, and she clung all the more tightly to the Church of England, whose sacred mission alone could preserve her from self-reproach, and to the Tories, who guarded that Church from agnosticism or Dissent. Thus it followed that the Queen had a sentiment for the Jacobite cause, against which she warred, and a liking for the Tories, who felt as she did; and she nursed a resentment against the Whigs, because if there had not been such people there never would have been such problems. As long as she lived she meant to reign. She had already buried many children. But she still prayed, and invoked the prayers of the Church of England, for an heir. If that failed—and miracles were rare—then it must be an open question who should succeed her at her death. Certainly above all things she was determined that, however ill the fates might lie, the detestable Hanoverian who for reasons of State had spurned her youth and maidenhood should not obtrude himself within her bounds. Con-

[1] Clarke, *Life of James II*, ii. 602.

science and kinship, in revolt from such possibilities, turned to Saint-Germains. After all, "maybe 'tis our brother."

Among the sympathies which united the Queen to Marlborough and Godolphin was their mysterious respectful attitude towards the exiled house. Like her, they seemed to wish for forgiveness without making reparation. Like her, while waging ruthless war, they laboured to preserve not only polite relations but some human contact with the opponent they were destroying. Never was such sincere deceit, such studied effort to enjoy both sides of the argument, such airy indulgence of sentiment, while purpose and action flowed inexorably down the opposite channel.

But Sarah was different, and the changes in her position from the beginning of the reign deserve close study. Anne on her coming to the throne still loved Sarah fondly. Nothing gave the Queen more pleasure than to bestow honours and wealth upon her friend and those who were dear to her. Sarah was at once made Groom of the Stole, Mistress of the Robes, and Comptroller of the Privy Purse, and both her married daughters became Ladies of the Bedchamber. William's death deprived the Earl of Portland (Bentinck) of the Rangership of Windsor Park, and a few weeks later, in May, the Queen, remembering that Sarah had often admired the Lodge, wrote:

> Mentioning this worthy person puts me in mind to ask dear Mrs Freeman a question which I would have done some time ago; and that is, if you would have the Lodge for your life, because the warrant must be made accordingly; and anything that is of so much satisfaction as this poor place seems to be to you, I would give dear Mrs Freeman for all her days, which, I pray God, may be as many and as truly happy as this world can make you.[1]

These appointments and bounties were more than the moving of furniture about by an incoming tenant who had long had her own views upon its previous arrangement; they expressed the sincere affection and friendship which glowed in Anne's generous heart for one who had shared the joys and sorrows of her life and its bleak years.

Nevertheless we must not overrate the influence of Sarah upon national affairs. On the contrary, her relations with Anne were definitely, though at first insensibly, impaired. At the accession the ties which joined them were of nearly thirty years' growth, and their differences of political opinion and temperament were frankly and

[1] Anne to Sarah, May 19, 1702; Coxe, i, 143.

sympathetically recognized on both sides. But these differences were fundamental. Sarah's logical mind and downright character offered no shelter for the internal dualism which oppressed the Queen. She was not troubled by spiritual conflict. She despised the warming-pan myth as much as she abhorred the Church of Rome. England would not have Popery or Absolutism, and the sooner kings and queens were taught this, the better for them and their subjects. Sarah was an inveterate Whig, with a detached, disdainful, modern outlook upon life, except where her interests were touched, and a tolerance and rationalism on religion which would now class her as an agnostic. Her salt common sense, her pithy conversation, and her pungent judgment of men, women, and politics, had long fascinated, fleetingly convinced, and at times terrified the Queen. The two women had hitherto lived in the most sincere and natural comradeship possible between persons of the same sex. Till now they had dwelt in a small society in the Cockpit or at St James's, generally under an official cloud and without responsibility or power. The sharp contrasts in politics and religion between Mrs Morley and Mrs Freeman had not been of much importance so long as they lived together in private life. But now Anne was Queen. She was forced from day to day to make grave choices of men and things: and here immediately opened a constant discordance and friction between the two by which in the long run their wonderful friendship was slowly but surely worn away. Indeed, it is amazing that it survived for several years.

From the outset and for nearly six years Marlborough through one agent or another managed nearly everything. Anne yielded herself gladly and often unconsciously to his guidance; and thus the main direction of British, and presently of European, affairs came to reside in Marlborough's hands. The Queen had always her own wishes, and these had almost invariably to receive satisfaction. Often they centred upon minor matters, and did not touch the supreme needs of the State. The more clear-cut and vital decisions of war and policy were largely beyond her comprehension. Great actions in the field, the webs or clashes of politics, the long, deep furrows of strategy, were necessarily outside her sphere. But Queen Anne knew without the slightest doubt what she wanted, and where she wanted to go, and she knew still better where she would never be made to go.

We must at the outset establish her relations with Marlborough. They were always the relations of mistress and servant. Never, in

private or in public, in the dark times of William and the Tower, or in the European glories of Blenheim and Ramillies, never on the flowing tide of over-lavish favour, or in the hour of injustice and dismissal, did John Churchill lose for one moment the instinct of submission to the august personage he served. A servant confronted with impossible tasks or subjected to undue strain might claim to retire; a mistress might beseech him to remain—or might not; but the relation was dominant, tacit, and immutable. We must recognize this, for it is the keynote of the reign. The Queen was the crowned embodiment of the nation, and she often interpreted in a shrewd and homely way to a degree almost occult what England needed and, still more, what England felt. We portray her as a great Queen championed by a great Constable.

Thus was inaugurated the age of Anne. A gulf in national life separates it from the times of Charles II. That gulf had been traversed almost unperceived during the alien interlude of William III. Many unspoken conclusions had gathered in these fourteen years which now emerged as the accepted facts of society. We have entered a period less antique, less harsh, less grim, but with more subtle complications. The struggle of parties continued in the midst of war with an inconceivable bitterness and vigour which were, however, far removed from the brutalities of the Popish Plot and its revenges. The personal stakes for which sovereigns and their Ministers were forced to play were more limited. It was now only nominally that their heads were brought into question. Their property and even their liberty stood on a more assured foundation. All men breathed a gentler air. But the problems with which they were vexed were more baffling because more refined. A large instructed audience, comprising many different classes in the State and a great number of independent notables, watched with lively attention the marches of the armies and the movements of the fleets, the course of trade, the debates in Parliament, and the great personalities at the head of the nation. All classes rose together in the rapid expansion of England. The nobility were recovering an almost feudal splendour after a century and a half of eclipse. The Parliamentary Constitution and the Cabinet system developed with extraordinary speed. The coffee-houses buzzed and throbbed with an activity of thought, speech, and pamphleteering unprecedented in the past, unparalleled in contemporary Europe, and not approached again for a long period in England itself. The City merchants and financiers became a factor in world affairs. Science, learning,

architecture, literature, and painting continued to herald all along the line the general advance of the islanders. Public opinion and national consciousness moved forward hand in hand. The masses of the people shared in the national gains.

For two hundred years, during which the sway of Britain became world-wide, we were ruled by an oligarchy. Although the population was but an eighth of its present numbers, there were probably under Anne twenty persons of consequence and of independent standing who had to be considered for every one who counts to-day. On every side were magnates, authorities, and institutions conscious of their rights and duties, and resolute to defend them on every occasion. Even in the most exciting crises the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, and the merchants, or, corporately the Lords and Commons, the Church and the City, already advanced their opinions with obstinacy and effect. The structure of the body politic was massive and rigid. A vigilant and jealous patriciate, as proud as any which had ruled in Rome or Venice, brooded with jealous eye upon all exceptional personal power. None of those sweeping effects with which the French Revolution and Napoleon have made us acquainted, none of those sudden mass-impulses by which dictators rise and are acclaimed to-day, were possible then. The common people were allowed no share in the high public opinion of the period; to court them would have been adjudged a crime. The names of Cromwell and of Monk were fresh and deep in the memories of the governing classes. Marlborough almost crept home after his victories to avoid any form of popular demonstration other than the formal thanksgivings prescribed by Parliament and the Crown. The field in which he acted, and upon which he had to encounter the despotic power of Louis XIV in sole control of twenty millions of the French, was one thickly occupied by pegs driven firmly into the ground as well as by many potent factions in movement. These forces he must combine, deflect, or cancel against each other before any of his real work could begin. Through all the pegs he must make his way to meet the foreign enemy, and choose some place between them for every sabre-stroke.

We may claim this period as on the whole the greatest in our history. In ten years England rose to the leadership of Europe. She gained the mastery of the seas, including the control—never since lost—of the Mediterranean. The ocean roads to trade and empire in the New World were opened. Her soldiers, according to their enemies, were the best in Europe. Her wealth and prosperity seemed

for a while to rise upon the tide of war. By the union with Scotland the island became one. The might of France was abated, and a balance was established in Europe to correct her exorbitant power. The Dutch ally, crippled in the long war, ceased to be a rival at sea, and weakening under the financial strain, soon ceased to be a rival in trade.

The foundations were laid of that power which fifty years later enabled Lord Chatham by the victories of Wolfe and Clive to drive all challengers alike from America and India.

Chapter Two

THE REPUBLIC OF THE DYKES

1702—APRIL

THE accession of Anne had raised Marlborough to the first position under the Crown in England, but across the Narrow Seas, in the Dutch Republic, he gained a domain of power and influence which was hardly less important and proved at the end of ten years more durable. The foundations of this had been laid during 1701, when as King William's plenipotentiary he had negotiated the treaties which constituted the Grand Alliance. Then it was that Marlborough, already for twenty years behind the scenes of European politics, acquired that direct, authoritative, personal knowledge of how its rulers and peoples stood towards one another. Then he had established contacts with the leading Dutchmen which were based upon broad political harmonies and fostered by mutual understanding and respect. These bonds were to be strained by the inherent divergences of interest and sentiment and the domestic stresses of England and Holland during so many years of unremitting struggle side by side. But they were never broken. Always, in spite of everything that vexed or tempted, Marlborough was true to the principle of the Anglo-Dutch alliance, and always the statesmen of the Republic trusted him as their anchor and salvation. At the very end, when he was hounded out of his own country and stripped of every vestige of power or favour, the fathers of the Republic and the populace of its cities treated him with the honours of a sovereign prince. The union thus formed in his person, as formerly in that of William of Orange, of the two Great Powers of the sea, of trade, and of the money market, was found capable of breaking the ambition of Louis XIV and humbling the might of France. It thus preserved that freedom for the Protestant religion and those rights of Parliamentary government which lighted and guarded the Age of Reason and prepared the civilization of the nineteenth century.

This was the great period of the Dutch Republic. The Seven Provinces, which had been forged in the fires of Spanish persecution

and tempered by heroic warfare against France on land and England by sea, were now become a wonderful instrument and force in Europe. They embodied a victory over suffering, tyranny, and dead-weight bulk which was of precious consequence to the future of mankind. But the very freedom which had preserved them, and the strength and tradition of the resulting organism, bore all the marks and characteristics of the protracted ordeals which had brought them forth. The Dutch Republic perhaps was the most perfect manifestation of obstinacy—constitutional, moral, temperamental—which has ever been known. Obstinacy, stolid, valiant, harsh, even brutal, dwelt in every fibre of the nation; and the humblest burghers and the smallest villages confronted the problems of Europe and the puzzles of men with their own narrow, potent, and unyielding convictions. Their service to the western world was at once sublime and matter-of-fact. They wished to be free, by which they meant—Protestant and democratic; prosperous, by which they meant—masters of seaborne commerce; and above all safe, by which they meant—behind a dyke, well guarded. The dyke embodied the national idea. On the one side it kept back the hungry seas; on the other the French armies. Behind their dykes they would dwell, and from this shelter they would trade. These and no more were their aims, and for their sake they gave forth over a prolonged period an immense volume of sacrifice and toil.

It is important to survey at this point the articulation of the Dutch States. The whole internal history of the United Provinces is the struggle between the centralized monarchy of the Oranges and the decentralized oligarchy of the bourgeois republicans. The structure of the Constitution was at once complex and rigid. The Dutch municipalities elected representatives, called Regents, from their burghal panels. These Regents, when assembled, formed the Provincial States. The Provincial States chose the delegates who formed the States-General. Each of the seven provinces had only one vote in the States-General, although there was no limit to the number of delegates who might be present. If there were not enough seats in the chamber they had to stand. Each municipality had a salaried officer, the Pensionary. Each province also had a Pensionary, who was in fact governor. The Pensionary of Holland, by far the largest province, paying 60 per cent. of the federal taxes, was known as the Grand Pensionary, and was generally the most powerful man in the Republic. Such was the frame of the Dutch State.

The Stadtholderate, with which was combined the function of Captain-General, was an elective executive office in each province. There was no constitutional reason why there should not be at one time seven Captains-General; but the almost invariable custom was for all the provinces to elect the same man, the heir of the first Dutch hero, William the Silent, to this post; and he became in fact hereditary monarch and war-lord, limited in his actions by the need of procuring the agreement of the oligarchy. The executive body of the States-General was the Council of State, which contained such officers as the Veldt-Marshal, the Treasurer-General, and the Greffier, or Clerk. But practically every detail of policy, every important appointment, every large movement of troops and ships, was referred to the States-General, while all main issues required consultation with each of the Provincial States. This cumbrous machinery hampered all war measures, and was only rendered tolerable through the earnest patriotism enforced upon its components by the gravity and imminence of the national danger. Indeed, when we contemplate the Dutch polity it seems marvellous that it could ever have endured the shocks of war. A confusion of authorities, a Babel of debate, a vehement formalism, a paralysis of action, endless half-measures, compose the picture. And yet this same divided, self-hampered state, with less than three million citizens, maintained year after year armies of a hundred and twenty thousand men against France, the second navy afloat, and an active, far-reaching commerce; and financed all these during ten years of war following on a century of struggle for life.

By the death of William of Orange the entire structure of the Dutch oligarchy and republic was riven or shaken. Their long power, their internal feuds, their elaborate foreign policy, their connexion with England, and their safety in a world war to which they were already committed, all were called to the most searching account. Although this event had been for some time expected, its shock was no less severe. Of the five supreme offices of State the two most important in a foreign crisis fell vacant. Heinsius the Syndic, Fagel the Clerk, and Hop the Treasurer were at their posts. But the Stadtholder and the Captain-General were buried in the tomb of King William III.

Who would lead the armies against the gathering foes? Who would preserve the common action of the Sea Powers? All seemed in dissolution and jeopardy. "When they had the first news of the King's death," wrote Burnet of the States-General,

> they assembled together immediately; they looked on one another as men amazed; they embraced one another and promised they would stick together and adhere to the interests of their country: they sat up most of the night and sent out all the orders that were necessary upon so extraordinary an emergency.[1]

Hard upon the news of William's death came the message from Marlborough to Heinsius promising in the name of the Queen the resolute prosecution of the war and adherence to the treaties. This caught the mood of the assembly at its most tense phase. Sorrow, perplexity, and alarm all took the channel of stern action. Through the long debate there resounded the unanimous determination to march forward unitedly upon the path the dead Stadtholder had opened and prescribed.

Nevertheless, within the Seven Provinces King William's death had unsealed many bitter discontents. In Holland, as in England, he had advanced his personal favourites far beyond the public esteem in which they stood. In his prolonged absences in England he had "allowed his trusted friends or creatures to rule over the country." The nation had submitted perforce. "The Republicans had not ventured to lift up their voice against the abuses of the prince's favourites, not even against Odijk, who played the tyrant in Zeeland, and enriched himself and his followers shamelessly."[2] The oligarchical party had waited with as much impatience as the English Tories for the death of the unpopular but indispensable prince. Now that the event had happened, what was virtually a clean sweep was made throughout the provinces of William's men. Latterly his wish had been that his young cousin, John William Friso of Nassau, whom we shall meet later at Oudenarde and Malplaquet, should succeed him. But at this time the prince was a lad of fourteen, still at his books in Utrecht. The Captain-Generalship of the Republic therefore remained unfilled, though a general war had begun.

A few days after their debate Marlborough was in their midst. He was received in Holland at this juncture almost with worship. He was already trusted as a friend, and here was a friend in need. The Dutch instinctively regarded him as their champion and deliverer, and much of the loyalty and trust they had given to William of Orange was directed almost unconsciously to this gleaming English figure which appeared in a dark hour so suddenly among

[1] Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, vii, 4.
[2] P. J. Blok, *History of the People of the Netherlands*, v, 3.

them, speaking in accents of comfort and command. He was careful to postpone all contact with the States-General until after he had reached conclusions with Heinsius and with Count Goes, the Imperial Ambassador. We have found no record of his conversation with the Pensionary, but Goes, whom he visited immediately afterwards, has left us an excellent account. Indeed, it is in the dispatches of Goes, Wratislaw, and other envoys that we can most plainly hear Marlborough speak, and feel his hand closing upon affairs. Goes wrote his dispatches only a few hours after their talks and while the impression was still vivid. "The only change resulting from the death," said Marlborough, "is this, that the Queen does not take the field. In all the remaining conduct of affairs the general business against France will lose nothing. The Queen will be loyal to the alliances which have been formed. For that reason," he added, "I hope that the article of the Alliance relating to the pretended Prince of Wales will now be accepted in Vienna." On this, as will be seen, the Ambassador was not yet instructed. Goes therefore turned the conversation questioningly to the opinion which he said prevailed in Holland that the Sea Powers would conduct the war as associates rather than allies, and that consequently there would be no need for the Dutch to give up the lucrative carrying-trade which they did for France. Marlborough at once stamped upon this idea. That it was ridiculous, he said, would be proved by prompt, uncompromising declarations of war.

Upon William's offers to the Emperor about the West Indies Marlborough said the King might have gone farther. "If the Emperor can induce the West Indies to declare for him, we in England are ready to support him without making any claim for ourselves. We would rather that all these islands should fall to the Emperor than that they should be divided between the Powers. If the Emperor is not to have them all, then he would surely be agreeable that we should take as many of them from the house of Bourbon as we can." This frank and fair-seeming offer was made with the knowledge that the declarations of the West Indian islands would not fulfil the condition required. Thus, in fact, the Ambassador learned in the most courteous guise that England meant to take all she could in the West Indies. Such latitude was highly important to Marlborough, because of the Tory predilection for oceanic ventures and conquest.

About Naples and the Italian provinces Marlborough reversed William's policy. "The King," he said, "spoke to Count Wratis-

law on this matter rather as hereditary Stadtholder of Holland than as King of England. I have taken it much to heart to dissuade him from his view so that it might not seem that England wished to prevent the Emperor from acting vigorously in Italy. Anyhow that is done with; and I may now assure you that England will strain every nerve to secure that all the Spanish possessions in Italy without exception shall fall to the Emperor's share. That is the constant thought of the Queen in accordance with the opinion and interest of the English people. If the Emperor can provide the necessary forces England will stand loyally by his side and the Republic must follow our lead." The Ambassador renders these last words of Marlborough, which were no doubt spoken in French, "Die Republik muss mitgehen." They were soon found to be significant. "I have been asked," Marlborough continued, "by a member of the States-General whether England is willing to send a fleet to the Mediterranean. I have told him he can look at our preparations for naval war, and then himself answer the question whether these are intended only to hold the Channel."[1] Thus he sought to confine the Emperor's aims to Europe and direct his chief effort upon Italy, while leaving the new world overseas to England.

In those words, "the Republic must follow our lead," we have the first indication of the change wrought by the death of William III upon the relations of England and Holland. William was a Dutchman to the core. He regarded England as a valuable auxiliary which his birth, marriage, and achievements had gathered to the Republic. The arrival of Marlborough in power meant that the combination would continue—nay, it would become more forceful than ever. The same main objects would be pursued even more vigorously. England would make a greater and not a smaller contribution. But the predominance would lie in the island rather than among the dykes. The alliance would be of England and Holland, instead of the old reversed form. But of this only the four German words which the Ambassador reported gave any sign. The declaration had yet to be made good by the weight of the English effort and by events in the field. The Dutch Republic was for some time unconscious of the altered emphasis and priority, and they learned it only through the agreeable channel of aid and victory.

> No longer was Holland in and through the personality of William III the leading power, but by the force of the personality, not of Queen Anne, but of Marlborough, the leadership passed to England. The

[1] Goes's dispatch, March 31.

position developed to the full only in the course of time. But Marlborough was from the first fully aware of it.[1]

We must look for a moment at the leading Dutchmen. Franz Fagel, the Clerk or Greffier, was the head of the Civil Service of the Republic. He was its permanent head. He was its hereditary head. For more than a hundred years the Fagel family had secured to itself by industry and loyalty this great office with plenary authority which nothing had successfully disputed. The Clerk discharged in a magnified form all those duties which nowadays fall to the permanent chiefs of the Civil Service and of the Foreign Office. All the detailed elaboration of the Central Government decisions, as well as those of its civil and military officials, all the ceremonial conduct of the communications between the Dutch executive and foreign Courts and envoys, passed through his hands; and he controlled the staff and kept the papers by which the business was transacted. Besides this, Fagel was an orator and trained politician who had for many years shone in the debates of the States-General.

Jacob Hop was Treasurer-General. He too had a life-long experience of affairs. As the supreme finance officer of the Seven Provinces he not only called on the States-General to provide the means of maintaining the Army and Navy, but also through the money power exercised a potent influence upon foreign policy. He is described as a man of proud and even haughtily provocative nature, but a whole-hearted, uncompromising patriot, a ready speaker, and a skilled writer deeply versed in the politics of Europe. He had travelled widely, he had been Ambassador in Berlin, Copenhagen, Vienna, and London. He was the implacable enemy of the house of Bourbon. He devoted the prime of his life to gathering resources for the Dutch armies and sustaining them by every aid which far-seeing diplomacy might invoke.

But the most interesting and most powerful figure in the Dutch federation was Antony Heinsius, the Grand Pensionary. In its earliest form his office was that of a tribune of the people protecting the rights of the inhabitants against the Government of the Counts. Originally there had been in Holland only a Committee of Secret Affairs, without a Foreign Minister or an organized Foreign Department. But as the Republic became a great European Power, and, indeed, through its active public discussions, the forum of international affairs, the Pensionary of the State of Holland had become Foreign Minister. Besides this, through the preponderance of Hol-

[1] Klopp, x, 23.

land he was the informal but acknowledged leader of the States-General. All their deliberations could be subjected to his judgment, and he could initiate business and claim a vote. Even under the august authority of William of Orange, with the crown of England upon his brows, Heinsius had been in fact Chancellor of the State. Upon the death of the Stadtholder and as long as that office remained unfilled he became naturally and inevitably the citizen-sovereign of the Republic.

Heinsius was a lonely man, a bachelor of simple, austere habits whose whole life was one long round of official business. The discharge of his office was the tale of his existence, the unity and safety of the Republic his sole purpose. As the Dutch envoy to Versailles his resistance to the encroachments of Louis XIV after the Peace of Nimwegen had been carried to the point of Louvois's threatening him with the Bastille. Thereafter he was, like Hop, an inveterate enemy of French aggrandizement. He had entered Dutch party politics in the patrician oligarchy which saw its duty and its interest in counterbalancing the 'royalist' tendencies of the house of Orange. But after his experiences at the French Court he joined the circle in which William had gradually gathered almost all the most distinguished Dutchmen. The Stadtholder, when he became King of England, induced Heinsius to undertake the office of Grand Pensionary, with all that accession of responsibility which resulted from the prolonged absences of the ruler. The influence of Heinsius had helped King William to combine the headship of the two nations. He it was who had prevailed upon the States-General to maintain the Army at the strength of forty-five thousand men after the Peace of Ryswick, when the English Parliament had shown itself so improvident in disarmament. Already regarded, even in King William's lifetime, as the most eminent statesman in Europe outside France, Heinsius in all except military operations presided over and conducted the policy of the Republic. His aims, if narrow, were definite. In his own nature he embodied the national conviction or obsession of the dyke. All his life-work was devoted to building an invincible fortress-barrier between his fatherland and France. We shall see later the part that this played in history.

His sincerity was felt by all who came in contact with him. Although a man of high courage and indomitable perseverance, he carried soberness of judgment to the point of pessimism. Nor did he care if friends who visited him in his modest dwelling in times of crisis found him in tears amid his papers over the perils of

the State. His patience in discussion, his kindliness, his probity won universal respect. It was obvious to all that he must fill a large part of the void which had opened. Upon him descended the responsibility for maintaining the treaties of the Grand Alliance, and above all the special relations with England, which William's double office had enshrined. And in this his friendship with Marlborough and their mutual confidence were decisive. Heinsius looked upon Marlborough as his link with England. It was as a statesman and diplomatist rather than as a soldier that the foundations of Marlborough's influence in Holland were laid. The military command was a second stage. Thus events shaped themselves gradually and naturally, until Heinsius and Marlborough together filled King William's place, with less authority, but far greater success. The three great Dutchmen speedily accepted Marlborough as a fourth comrade. Principally he dealt with Heinsius, but there is a lengthy correspondence with both Hop and Fagel. These statesmen sat almost as close to him and were as much a part of his system as Wratislaw and Eugene in dealing with the Empire, or the Queen and Godolphin and, to some extent, Harley at home.

The discussions at The Hague were now complicated by the English demand that an article should be added binding all the allies to the exclusion from the English throne of the pretended Prince of Wales—*Prætensus Princeps Walliæ.* Both parties at Westminster were open-mouthed for it. To the Whigs it was a cardinal principle and one of the main objects of the war. Very different were the motives of extreme Tory partisans in supporting a proposal which ran counter to their sentiments. Though their leaders could not refuse, they did not wish to be drawn into the European war—except upon the loosest terms. They did not believe that the Emperor could ever bring himself to apply the word *prætensus* to James II's son. It must seem from his point of view to strike both at truth and divine right. Thus the renewal of the Alliance and the outbreak of the war would be at least obstructed. Accordingly there had been seen the extraordinary spectacle of Sir Edward Seymour as one of the Tory chiefs proposing in the House of Commons this additional article, which was, of course, blithely accepted by the Whigs. This is the first of several occasions which we must note where the Tory Party overreached themselves in too clever Parliamentary tactics designed to embarrass their opponents by putting forward Whig doctrines mischievously.

Henceforward the article, almost unanimously endorsed, became

a vital counter, both in English politics and in the European situation. Marlborough understood this perfectly. He had gone to Holland with the firm intention of procuring the assent of all the signatory Powers to the new article, including the word *prætensus*. But upon this word, as the Tory leaders knew, the Emperor Leopold had the deepest misgivings. The Imperial Ministers advised him to consult his confessor, a Jesuit, Menegatti. He was reluctant even to do this from a well-grounded apprehension that Menegatti was already in touch with his Ministers. At the moment when Marlborough reached The Hague he was still believed to be resisting. His Ambassador, Goes, declared himself as yet unable to make a definite statement upon the article. Heinsius added that he had learned that the Emperor would not agree to it unless the offending words were omitted. Goes has recorded Marlborough's vehement reply: "If that is the case," he said, "I cannot conclude anything here. The English nation will be so excited that I cannot agree to anything. I do not understand why the Imperial Ministers cannot appreciate the significance of the title of Prince of Wales. A Prince of Wales is, like the Dauphin in France, the recognized heir to the throne. For the very reason that in France the name of Prince of Wales is usually applied to the son of King James, the word *prætensus* has been selected in England and adopted in various Acts of Parliament. The idea of implying thereby any judgment as to the Prince's birth was not in the mind of Parliament at all. Indeed, the question of birth was carefully avoided by Parliament. But on the other hand it is quite impossible to vary the phraseology of an article which is based upon an Act of Parliament. I ask therefore for an immediate decision, or the despatch of a courier to Vienna with a correct explanation of the position."[1]

This forcible intervention shows plainly not only the importance of the issue, but once again how Marlborough stood towards the exiled house at Saint-Germains. He was always their most formidable opponent. He might, like many Tories, indulge a Jacobite sentiment; he might preserve the most agreeable relations possible with Saint-Germains; but he never allowed either his feelings towards, or his conversations with, the real Jacobites to influence in the slightest degree his State policy. And now we see him, at the very outset of his control of affairs, throwing the whole weight of England against them.

However, while the three Plenipotentiaries were sitting in

[1] Goes's dispatch, April 4; Klopp, x, 29.

conference on April 3, dispatches arrived from Vienna for both Goes and Heinsius. In the face of the Emperor's repugnance the Imperial Ministers had themselves obtained an opinion from Menegatti. This was not at all unlike the argument which Marlborough had just used. The Jesuit fruitfully explored the word 'pretender.' It might as well be read as meaning 'claimant' as 'impostor.' "As it is quite true that the surviving son of King James pretends to be Prince of Wales, and in the additional article nothing is said as to the validity of this pretence, I am of opinion that without any injustice to King James his son can be described as the pretended Prince of Wales. . . . For the issue as to whether he is in reality what he pretends to be, or pretends without justification, is left undecided."[1] Nevertheless, the Emperor had made one final effort, and Goes found himself instructed only to agree to *prætensus* in the last resort. But Heinsius had opened his report from the Dutch Ambassador at Vienna. "I see here," he interposed, "that the Emperor has agreed to the term *prætensus* on the advice of his Confessor." Thus undermined, Count Goes made the best bargain he could, and his nimbleness deserves admiration. "Though your correspondent," he said to Heinsius, "may guess at the contents of my dispatch, it all depends on its interpretation. This is the position: if the declaration of war against France depends wholly on my answer, I am prepared to gratify Lord Marlborough, at least in the hope that my action will be approved; that is to say, I will sign the additional article. But the two things are inseparable."

Nothing could suit Marlborough better. All, in fact, fell into his hands. He obtained agreement both upon the simultaneous declaration of war and the additional article from Holland and the Empire. Not only did this serve his great purposes in Europe, but it left the high Tories with no excuse but to support the war. The condition they had pretended to desire was obtained. They had insisted that the wine they most disliked should be drawn, and now they must drink it with what grace they could.

The practical and vital question of the command of the armies of the Sea Powers was not brought to an issue during Marlborough's visit; yet it was in every one's mind. Even before Marlborough had reached The Hague some steps had been taken by the Dutch Government. They apprehended, not without good information, that Queen Anne would propose Prince George of Denmark to them. The Queen was sure that her beloved husband was the very man for

[1] The Jesuit's answer is in Latin. Klopp, x, 402.

this responsibility and power. She was alone in her view, and, as one might say, biased; but her view was none the less important. It was well known in Holland that the Prince Consort's intellect and ability were extremely modest. In the earliest Dutch conclaves this was not felt by all to be an insuperable objection for a commander-in-chief of armies in a deadly war. Such a personage would obviously be controlled by a council of war, and this procedure was highly valued by the Republic, since it gave so many people a chance of expressing their opinion. On the other hand, it was contended that a certain amount of brains and personal force were desirable in the chief of armies about to be brought in contact with the military power of France. The more the matter was discussed, the more they realized the loss the Republic had sustained by the death of King William III. Meanwhile, as Marlborough was approaching and it was certain he would press Prince George of Denmark upon them, they thought it best to appoint the aged invalid Prince of Nassau-Saarbrück Veldt-Marshal temporarily as a stopgap. Near him stood Ginkel, whom we must recognize in the Earl of Athlone, an able and experienced officer, the limits of whose solid capacity had been established. Ginkel did not conceal his opinion that the post of Captain-General of the Dutch—and consequently of the English—Army belonged to him. Behind Ginkel there was an array of veteran Dutch generals—Opdam, Slangenberg, Overkirk—all of whom had seen far more service than Marlborough, and looked sourly upon the claims of foreigners. Such was the situation when Marlborough arrived.

No one can ever tell from the records which have survived whether at this time he expected to obtain the supreme command for himself. But it is certain that he pressed Prince George's claims in such a manner that if they had not been absurd they must have been accepted. He did not on this occasion make a direct proposal. According to Goes, he said he was not authorized to raise the question formally. If, however, the proposal were made from the Dutch side, it would seem the best way of binding the two armies together as closely as before, and he stated that as the English Captain-General he would then readily serve under Prince George as Commander-in-Chief. But this very combination of an intense and dominating personality with the Queen of England's husband in his hand as a puppet Commander-in-Chief alarmed the Dutch magnates even more than the Prince of Denmark by himself. It might well, it seemed, be destructive of the authority of councils of war—nay, of the States-

General themselves. They therefore fell back into a state of indecision from which Marlborough did not at all attempt at this time to rescue them. There is no doubt that now and later at the Queen's command he paraded Prince George's claims with an earnestness which convinced that good man that he had done everything possible on his behalf; and this in spite of gossip, rumour, and suggestion in their most plausible forms.

Certain it is that he employed every argument in favour of Prince George. We have his letter to Godolphin from The Hague of April 11:

> *I have with all the care I am capable of endeavoured to incline these people to desire the honour of having the Prince to command their army as well as the English. To the Pensioner and such as I can trust I have let them see very plainly that it is His Royal Highness only that can unite [bring in] the forty thousand paid by England. The King of Prussia will be tomorrow at Wesel, in order to make all the interest he can to have the command. The Elector of Hanover underhand does all he can to have it; the Duke of Celle is also named.
>
> The difficulty of this matter is that not only every province but every town must consent before the States can make an offer. Your thought of the Archduke [Charles] the Pensioner thinks is not practicable for this year.

Once again we see a strangely characteristic instance of Marlborough doing everything that a man could be asked to do against his own interest in complete sincerity and with force and skill, and yet none the less advancing the course which favoured his heart's desire. The extraordinary feature is that in his advocacy of Prince George's claims lay the surest route to the attainment of his own. How was he, a subject, a private man, to set himself against the kings and princes of the Grand Alliance, or against the old, trusted, proved generals of the Dutch Republic? Compared with such rivals, some of whom, like the Prussian, even hinted they might join the enemy if their wishes were not gratified, his personal merit stood no chance. But Prince George of Denmark, with the Queen of England vital and powerful behind him, was a figure large enough to scare away the crows.

We do not think he was at all sure at this juncture that the command would fall to him. In that patient, persistent, contriving mind, long accustomed to inferior solutions, there must have arisen a practical plan by which Prince George would hold the supreme command while Marlborough, from the second place, would

nevertheless govern the event. Nor did he recoil from such expedients. The best obtainable was nearly always good enough for him. Besides, at this stage it was his bounden duty to press the Prince George proposition, and that proposition, backed by Queen Anne, would certainly extinguish the Continental royalties. Again and again we see him in the most correct positions, where his duty was afterwards perceived to be his interest, but was none the less his duty. After all, no one can be blamed for executing a lawful mission faithfully, merely because if his efforts failed the consequences would be good for him and for his country. So in the upshot Queen Anne was decisive against the foreign royalties, the Dutch were obdurate against her husband, and none of the generals of the Republic were acceptable to the English Government. Under extreme conflicting pressures the Dutch fell back on negative solutions. Stanhope, our envoy at The Hague, broached the choice of a generalissimo to the Pensionary, who answered that the whole question was "too nice for him to appear to concern himself any way in. . . . They shrug up their shoulders and say 'tis a slender point, and they ought to be pardoned for the preservation of their liberty. . . . It seems to me they design no other General but the old Prince of Nassau-Saarbrück."[1]

Here, then, this all-important matter rested uncomfortably for the time being. Its solution must be sought in the inherent prejudices of the Dutch. They disliked a royal Commander-in-Chief. They feared even more a combination of Marlborough plus a royal prince whom he dominated. They were seeking the impossible; they wanted a general who would be strong against the enemy, but weak and submissive towards themselves. Their ideal was a deferential dictator, a docile champion. And here the fundamental cleavages of Dutch politics reveal themselves. The Amsterdammers and all the elements least favourable to the war most wanted a weak command. It was the keynote of their politic that there should be no resurrection of the 'Royalist' offices of War-lord or Stadtholder. They therefore looked with favour upon a foreigner who was not a prince, because he would be the more controllable. Subject to this condition, they were agreeable to his being competent. Thus from the first in those very quarters where the sharpest opposition might have been expected there was a definite inclination towards this Englishman, of no great rank, but undoubtedly a remarkable person.

Marlborough allowed all this to simmer. When we consider the

[1] Stanhope to Vernon, April 25; S.P. 84/224, f. 22.

dazzling prize, as it must have seemed to an ardent soldier, which dangled aimlessly in the air, we must be astonished at his composure and seeming detachment. If he had lifted his hand to grasp it, a hundred voices of authority would have been raised against him. Yet can we believe that he was indifferent? Could so powerful a mental mechanism of schemes and action be combined with perfect self-effacement? However this may be, Marlborough quitted The Hague without having exposed by even the twinkle of an eye the slightest personal interest in the question of command, while at the same time there grew throughout the high circles of the Republic the general feeling that no one would suit all purposes so well as he.

Not until after he had reached agreement upon the main lines of policy with Heinsius and Goes did Marlborough present himself to the States-General. He had wished to preserve an informal and private status. But the public temper would not be satisfied without a demonstration. Accordingly at Heinsius' insistence he assumed the character and style of an Ambassador-Extraordinary, and went to the Assembly in full pomp. He was received with the utmost honour. He addressed Their High Mightinesses in French.

"Her Majesty . . . is firmly resolved to contribute all that lies in her power towards the advancing and increasing union, friendship, and correspondence, and to make that a constant maxim of her government. . . . She will not only exactly and faithfully observe and execute the treaties and alliances made between the Kings her predecessors and your High and Mighty Lordships, but . . . is likewise ready to renew and confirm them; as also to concur with you in all the measures which have been taken by the late King of glorious memory, in pursuance of the said alliances. Her Majesty is likewise disposed to enter into such other stricter alliances and engagements, which shall most conduce to the interests of both nations, the preservation of the liberty of Europe and reducing within just bounds the exorbitant power of France.

"In the meantime Her Majesty is ready from this moment and without any delay to concur to this end, with all her forces as well by sea as by land. . . . And Her Majesty to show her zeal the more has been pleased to authorize me to concert . . . the necessary operations. These motives obliged Her Majesty to order me to depart with all diligence in order to come hither, and give . . . all possible assurances thereof, without stopping at the ordinary formalities. And I look upon it as an extraordinary happiness that Her Majesty has done me the honour to employ me in this commission,

since it gives me the opportunity of expressing . . . the zeal I have for your service."[1]

Dykevelt, William's old agent, now President of the Assembly, in welcoming these bold, plain offers with thanks and "with a flood of tears,"[2] turning to Marlborough, added "that his person would be highly acceptable to them not only for the Queen's choice of him and for the sake of King William who first invested him with that character, but for his own merit."[3]

These declarations, carried as fast as the posts could ride into every capital, consolidated the Grand Alliance. All the temptations, bribes, and threats which French diplomacy was offering to every signatory Power lost their potency. Marlborough restored the vast structure which King William's death had seemed about to dissolve. And this was what King William had foreseen and prepared. We must pause to contemplate the shock to friend and foe of the King's death and the counter-shock when it was realized that the gap was filled. No one at this time dreamed that the new indispensable Man at the centre would step forward and weld the confederacy with tireless patience, or strike its enemies down with stunning blows. It was enough for rejoicing that William's cause had not perished with his breath. In this temper all the treaties and military conventions, the quotas of fleets and armies, were eagerly confirmed.

Marlborough's mission was therefore entirely successful. In ten days he had rallied all the signatories of the Grand Alliance and expressed all their engagements in strict terms. Treaties were also prepared between the Emperor and Poland, and subsidy-treaties were signed with Prussia, Münster, Hesse-Cassel, Mecklenburg, Trèves, and Lüneberg. All that had threatened to fall to pieces was now gripped together more strongly than ever; where all had been doubt and despondency there was now resolve and confidence. The Dutch rejected with scorn the peace proposals of Louis XIV. The three Great Powers bound themselves together secretly to declare war upon France on May 4/15. The additional article, with the word *prætensus*, was duly signed, and the English political situation was for the time being consolidated for the most vigorous action. Nothing remained when Marlborough returned to England for King William's funeral but to choose the commander, make the plans, and begin the fighting. But these were matters not to be so swiftly settled.

[1] Boyer, *Annals of the Reign of Queen Anne*, i, 12.
[2] Legrelle, *La Diplomatie française et la Succession de Espagne* (1892), iv, 263 *et seq.*
[3] Lediard, *Life of John, Duke of Marlborough* (1736), i, 143.

Chapter Three

QUEEN ANNE'S FIRST GOVERNMENT

1702—MAY

QUEEN ANNE and Marlborough had not waited to begin their political studies until after the death of King William had been formally announced. They both knew what they wanted to do, and their aims, though different, were not in the main incompatible. The government of England had passed by lawful succession to Princess Anne and her Cockpit group. There they were, this tiny circle, bound together by common interests and by the anxieties and partisanship of many years—the Queen, sacred and at the moment of accession almost omnipotent; Marlborough, master of politics and diplomacy, and certainly the leading English general; Sarah, the much-loved link; and Godolphin, the faithful friend of the Queen and kinsman of the Marlboroughs. Here was a close confederacy which had been slowly and tensely wrought. Anne had insisted upon the equality of their intercourse, but this privilege was strictly limited. Mrs Morley, Mr and Mrs Freeman, and Mr Montgomery—there could not be a tighter thing. They formed a group as integral and as collectively commanding as anything of which there is record in our annals. Outside, beyond their privacy, prowled the magnates of the Whigs and Tories with their strident factions and the formidable processes of Parliament. Outside lay the Church of England in the highest state of effervescence, and the finances of the country, already drained and overtaxed by a long war. Across the seas loomed the European coalition and the mighty armies of France, already on the march. With all these the Cockpit must now deal. It must have seemed an unequal struggle; but the result showed them completely triumphant, and had they held together to the end it is certain that they could have continued to enforce their will in every direction.

Below this personal organism of the Queen and the genius of Marlborough came the constitutional Ministry of the realm. This had now to be formed. It must surely be Tory. The phrases of the Queen's Speech which had chilled the Whigs had made this fact

public. The Queen was a Tory and a High Tory at heart. Marlborough was a Tory by origin, sentiment, and profession. But he was quite cool about whether the Government was Tory or Whig. What he sought was a political system that would support the war. He shared none of Anne's strong feelings about the High Church or Low Church bishops. Unity at home and in Parliament to sustain, with the combined resources of the nation, the war abroad against the power of France was his sole and only end. When all deference had been shown to the Queen's wishes Marlborough secured from her the larger necessities of his policy. He was still convinced that the war against France could only be waged with success by a united nation. The Tories were the peace party. Their opposition would rend the State. But if the responsibilities of office would compel them to face the task themselves, then they could make the war truly national. The Whigs would have no choice but to support them, and no wish but to do it themselves instead. It was therefore certain that, though the Whigs had a narrow majority in the existing House of Commons, the emphasis of the new reign and the character of the Queen's first Government would be Tory. Anne desired to gather Tory Ministers round her, and Marlborough sought a solid Parliamentary foundation for the war.

Both sovereign and counsellor wished by the retention of some Whigs in the less important offices to make the Government broad-bottomed, and to tinge it with a national beyond a party complexion. The Tories were moreover made aware that if they received the favour of the Crown and were entrusted with the conduct of public affairs, it must be upon the basis that they would support and prosecute the war with the whole of their party forces. These undertakings their leaders were ready to give, though with many unspoken reservations which will presently emerge about the character and scale of England's war effort. This Tory allegiance to the war was the foundation of the politics of the first half of the reign. However fierce the faction fights might be, however bitter the rivalries of the parties or the discontents of deposed Ministers, it was definitely understood that the waging of the war and the voting of the necessary supplies were above and beyond political strife. This dominant condition was on the whole punctiliously fulfilled.

The two pillars of a Tory Ministry must, of course, be Rochester and Nottingham. Their careers have both run through this account. We remember Rochester as the Laurence Hyde who had striven to convert James to Protestant conformity in the 1680's; as the Lord

Treasurer whose financial irregularities had escaped from the clutches of the great Halifax through the opportune death of Charles II, and whose indifferent attitude to Anne in her troubles with King William was also not forgotten. Rochester was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at the moment of the demise. William had purposed his removal with the other Tories. Rochester had come to London at his summons. He was now a personage of the highest consequence. In the public eye as an uncle of the Queen he stood very near the throne. His elder brother, Clarendon, could not bring himself to take the oath to his niece against the rightful heir; but Rochester had bowed to the Act of Settlement. Upon the dynastic question his conscience was at rest. Office would confirm its repose. He was moreover the lay champion of the Church of England. The carping voice of criticism alleged against him an indulgence in liquor, with consequential bad language, as well as other vanities of various kinds which ill-accorded with his pontifical airs and public professions. Burnet describes him as "the smoothest man in the Court." Another view was "a difficult and prickly man." Certainly his impressive virtues and far-famed piety were no bar against the seductions of ambition or intrigue. Nevertheless, if anyone could be said to embody in his person what the Tory Party stood for in Church and State, it was Rochester.

At his side was Nottingham, the experienced and accomplished Minister who under William and Mary had meddled—too much to please the admirals—with the command of the fleet, and did justice to Marlborough when he was in jeopardy by the forgeries of Robert Young. Nottingham's birth, his experience, his culture, his versatile learning, his natural piety and upright life, entitled him to the respect of the Tory squires and the country clergy. Even his opponents did not accuse him of hypocrisy. They commented upon his "airs of a Spanish grandee" and upon his pompous delivery of the commonplaces of Oxford parsons. When he dwelt with unction on the Divine Right of the Anglican priest-kingship and the unity of Church and State, when he descanted upon the mystical significance of Primogeniture, and conducted his fight against the Dissenters with a display of prodigious school-learning, friend and foe fled the chamber. But no one could deny that he had kept the Tory faith. He had withheld himself from the Popery of James II. His scruples had prevented him from signing the appeal to William. He had never tainted his record by taking part in the election of a sovereign by Parliament. He commanded almost tender devotion

from the most orthodox Tories. Descending to the secular sphere, Nottingham had throughout 1701 declaimed in the spirit of his party against costly intervention in Continental affairs. If this could not be avoided he fell back on Rochester's opinion "that we shall never have any decisive success nor be able to hold out in a war against France, but by making it a sea war and such a sea war as accompanies and supports attempts on land."[1]

Meanwhile the Queen's popularity, in which she rejoiced, grew by leaps and bounds. Nothing was more buoyant than her action about her Civil List. The Commons had voted her King William's revenue for life, but that revenue had included fifty thousand a year for herself, as heiress-presumptive. Might not the Whigs suggest that this sum should be passed on to the new heiress-presumptive, the Electress Sophia, and her son George? The Court at Hanover sat up attentive upon the point. Now this touched the old feud of the abandoned courtship in 1681. No English money while she was Queen should go to that quarter. Anne was, moreover, generous and even disdainful of money, although in a large way she had felt the want of it. The Commons were amazed to hear her announce that in view of the heavy taxes which weighed on her subjects she would restrict her expenditure in every possible way. "It is probable that the revenue may fall very short of what it has formerly produced; however I will give directions that one hundred thousand pounds be applied to the public service in this year, out of the revenue you have so unanimously given me."[2] Hoffmann reported to his Government that the enthusiasm which greeted this statement was indescribable. "Since Queen Elizabeth there had been no instance of such graciousness. . . . The Queen had completely won the hearts of her subjects."[3] Unnoticed by these subjects then and thereafter, she had won other points which also counted with her. There could certainly be no question of her being pressed to provide any money for the Court of Hanover. That hated brood could shift for themselves. We can only speculate upon the authorship of this brilliantly successful gesture. Marlborough was at The Hague. The new Ministry was not yet formed. The Queen was still surrounded by Whigs. Moreover, the act when we see it in its full light has a truly feminine quality. The abandonment of so large a sum of money was hardly what the matter-of-fact Sarah would have proposed. She

[1] Feiling, *History of the Tory Party*, p. 368. *Cf.* von Noorden's admirable vignette (i, 202).

[2] *Parliamentary History*, vi, 11.

[3] Hoffmann's dispatch, April 11.

makes no claim to have done so in her writings. It must have been the Queen's own plan; and if so the fact gives us a measure of the scale and force of her personal interventions in public affairs.

By the time Marlborough returned from The Hague the Queen's intention to rest upon the Tories was known everywhere, and the principal figures in the new Administration could be plainly discerned. At The Hague and Vienna the advent of the leaders of the peace party caused a natural anxiety. Moreover, a Tory member, Jack Howe, one of William III's most persistent assailants, had presented to the Queen an address from the Diocese of Gloucester which in fulsome terms invited her to assume a personal rule; and in Marlborough's absence Anne had replied, "I am greatly indebted to you and your friends, and thank you for your well-intentioned address." It was unusual for the Crown to reply to a partisan address. Whig remonstrances were made to Marlborough by the indirect channel of Wratislaw. Marlborough replied that he did not approve of the address or of the answer, but the Queen had not spoken deliberately, and had merely not wanted to offend anyone who addressed her in loyal terms. Protest was made to the Queen by the Duke of Somerset, who still retained the office he had held under William, and the Queen made answer that "on the public reading of the address she had not appreciated its real gist; now, on a close examination, she must openly admit that she did not approve of its substance."

Whether Marlborough had made representations, we do not know; but it is certain that he used his influence sparingly. He reserved it for essentials. Of these the first was Rochester's demand to be Lord Treasurer. If Marlborough was to lead the Army with any prospect of success he must be sure of the money for pay and supplies. He must have some one at the Treasury, and near the Queen at home, whom he could trust. We cannot doubt that before he went to Holland the Queen had promised him that Godolphin should have this key-post. At any rate, when Wratislaw early in April voiced the fears of the allies about Rochester, and asked why this troublesome personage was not sent off to his Viceroyalty in Ireland, Marlborough replied, "Have patience; he will have to go there nolens volens."[1]

Normanby's appointment as Lord Privy Seal a few weeks later caused another perturbation in Whig and allied circles. In King William's reign he had lived with Monsieur de Tallard, the French

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch, April 7; Klopp, x, 34.

Ambassador, on the most friendly and confidential terms, and it was said that Tallard's dispatches had been often based on information procured by Normanby. Wratislaw expressed his fears lest war secrets should be divulged by this new Cabinet Minister. Marlborough shrugged his shoulders and said that he had had nothing to do with Normanby's selection. "I am aware of his bad qualities and anxious about the results; *but it is not in my power to intervene in everything.* Anyhow the Lord Privy Seal has nothing to do with foreign affairs."[1] These instances are sufficient to show the separate will-power of the Queen and the care which Marlborough observed in dealing with her.

At the desire of his Mistress Marlborough continued to press upon the Dutch Prince George's claims to the supreme command of the armies. The more Tory appointments they saw in the new English Ministry the less they were inclined to such a plan. They recalled James II's spiteful but truthful remark upon the Prince of Denmark's departure from the camp at Salisbury, "the loss of a single trooper would have been of greater consequence."[2] In vain Marlborough applied his persuasive arts to Wratislaw, and dwelt upon the stimulus that would be given to the action of England if only the new Dutch Ambassador could bring the patent of Prince George's appointment with him among his credentials. Wratislaw replied:

> In accordance with your wishes I am ready to write to Goes [at The Hague] on the subject, but I must not conceal from you that I have little hope. The inclination of the republic has not been markedly favourable; and the Queen's movement towards the Tories will not help it.[3]

This forecast was well founded. The Dutch took refuge in the folds of their quaint but sometimes serviceable constitution. Even the threats conveyed by the English agents that England might stand out of the land war did not move them. All the towns of Holland except Dordrecht resolved that no Captain-General should be appointed; and Dordrecht bowed to the general view.

The Queen and her husband had to accept such an unmistakable decision. For months Marlborough had used all his influence upon the Dutch in favour of an appointment which must certainly run counter to his dearest wish and greatest need. He had failed. But it was not his fault. Certainly he had done more than could have

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch, May 3; Klopp, x, 34.
[2] Clarke, *Life of James II*, ii, 225
[3] Wratislaw's dispatch, May 3; Klopp, x, 34.

been claimed from mortal man. Despite all his force and tact, so faithfully forthcoming on this point, somehow or other he could not succeed. We must recognize the episode as one of his defeats. Yet the slightest suspicion that he had not tried his utmost to gain this silly point would have been fatal. Happily the project was so absurd that he could expend himself upon it without extravagant risk.

The character of the Government was not changed violently in a day. The transformation, which was ceaseless, was complete in about three months. The private funeral of King William III marked one of its stages. The coffin was conveyed on Sunday, after night had fallen, to the Henry VII Chapel at Westminster. Two days later Whig officers of the Household were replaced with Tories. Jersey became Lord Chamberlain, and Sir Edward Seymour, ailing and grumbling, with his solid block of West Country members behind him, became Comptroller. On May 2 Nottingham, in spite of his recalcitrance to the avowed main objects of the Government —namely, the maintenance of the Grand Alliance and the prosecution of the war—became publicly Secretary of State in charge of Southern Affairs at a council board which already included Rochester. Moreover, Rochester and Nottingham brought with them as their colleague in the Secretaryship of State (Northern Affairs) Sir Charles Hedges, a pleasant, adaptable man, who owed his preferment to their patronage. Soon the notorious Jack Howe of the Gloucester address, the defamer of King William, received a petty but challenging post. Marlborough had the greatest difficulty in inducing Devonshire to remain Lord Steward. Almost the only other Whigs in office were the Duke of Somerset, Master of the Horse, and Boyle, a friend of Harley, Chancellor of the Exchequer, an office then, and sometimes since, of subordination. All this was Anne. Marlborough waited for the main issues as a general should do on a battlefield. There were two of these. The first was the appointment of Godolphin to be Lord Treasurer and, as we should now say, Prime Minister. On this Marlborough had from the first been resolved. Against him stood Rochester with the whole Tory Party at his back. To the political world the matter seemed long in suspense.

Godolphin had proved his devotion in the days when Anne was under the scowl of "Mr Caliban," when Sarah was barred from the furtherest limits of the Court, and Marlborough was in the Tower. He had been Anne's friend when Rochester would not even carry

her letter to Queen Mary. Godolphin had always obstructed with the power of his office every attempt of William and Mary to reduce the Parliamentary grant by which the Cockpit household was sustained. Like the Churchills, Godolphin had not been driven in terror from Princess Anne's home and circle by the ban of the ruling Court. Like Marlborough, he had taught the future Queen a great deal about public affairs. Above all, he was an old friend. In the Queen's eye, therefore, Godolphin was of a different order altogether from the proudest dukes and greatest party leaders of the day. He was dignified in her mind by a title far above the common nobility. He was "Mr Montgomery." She had conceived and bestowed this honour herself from her own heart, without the aid of the College of Heralds or the forms of the English Constitution. Historians have fallen into tangled arguments through failing to understand the intense responses of Anne's warm heart and cunning mind.

Sidney Godolphin as Lord Treasurer suited Marlborough and fitted his purposes as neatly and as smoothly as Cadogan or Cardonnel in their respective posts. It is curious how he had the very man he needed close at hand, fully qualified, joined to him by a proved political attachment, and lately by a family bond. This is in no way to disparage the great independent position of Lord Godolphin. We have traced his life across three reigns for a quarter of a century. He has nearly always been a Minister and usually in charge of the finances. He was a master of all the secrets of State, and no one understood the high administration so well as he. None had his knowledge, and few his easy, suave, adaptable competence, or his calm, even temper. He was as perfectly in tune with the movement of parties and events at this moment as personally with the Queen and Marlborough.

A new sovereign was to be crowned: most of the Ministers of the late King were out of favour with her. Not so Godolphin. He had been turned out of office barely a year before King William's death. He represented just in time the incoming Tory tide. There must have been a great dexterity, and there must have also been an enormous fund of serviceableness. We remember Charles II's pithy description of him—"never in the way, never out of the way." Thus all the turns and surprises of party politics and changes of rulers left Godolphin eminently agreeable to every Administration and sovereign. He had held the Treasury as one of Charles II's "chits." He had voted for excluding the Duke of York from the

throne; he had been that King's Minister. He had accompanied him in unreproached loyalty almost to the beach. He had been one of King William's principal assistants, while making no secret of his sentimental devotion to the exiled Mary of Modena. He was never able to mount more comfortably into the saddle than upon the accession of Anne. Yet the bridging of all these gulfs did not seem a masterpiece of calculation. Each transaction had been smooth and natural, almost inevitable. Nor did he display at any time any keen appetite for office. He had resigned several times, and more often still had threatened to do so. He always had to be pressed to resume official service, and invariably declined with almost invincible obstinacy every post which was sure to be forced on him.

His life, though immersed in public business, was gay and debonair. Incorruptible, scrupulous to the last degree where public money was concerned, simple and frugal in his habits of living, he was renowned both as a gambler and a sportsman. Although constant to the memory of his wife, he had been known upon occasion to write love-poems on the cards at gaming-tables. He is described as a slim little man, stiff and awkward, with an abstracted glance, who moved with what appeared to be a dreamy detachment through the Court and the Council. In his home he was inaccessible. When he emerged into society he parried political questions with remarks about the weather. He was never really contented except at Newmarket.

> Who would not praise Patritio's high desert?
> His hand unstain'd, his uncorrupted heart,
> His comprehensive head? all intr'sts weigh'd,
> All Europe sav'd, yet Britain not betray'd?
> He thanks you not; his pride was in piquette,
> Newmarket fame, and judgment at a bett.[1]

Godolphin, of course, made his habitual objections. He did not wish to take office—there were so many other more amusing things to do. Of all offices the one he would least like was the care of the finances. How well he knew that arduous and thankless task! Surely after all these years he might be spared. He pressed this resistance to so sharp a point that we cannot tell at this distance of time, in spite of all research, with any certainty whether he wished to have the place or not. Certainly Marlborough had to use all his various influences to persuade him. The Captain-General declared in repeated letters that he would not attempt to conduct the war

[1] Pope, *Epistle to Cobham.*

and direct the armies unless Godolphin were Lord Treasurer. No one else could he trust. With no one else would he enter the struggle. He knew and foresaw many of the obstacles he would have to overcome before he could ever reach the enemy. He knew the Queen; he knew the Dutch; he knew the German Princes; he knew the English Parliament. Unless he could count on the Lord Treasurer to pay the British troops and their hired contingents, to pay for the supplies in the theatre of war and the munitions from home, he would not mount his horse. Sufficiently pushed, Godolphin yielded with dignity and on the best of terms, and thus in due course was opened the historic Marlborough-Godolphin Administration which through six years of general war led England and Europe triumphantly.

The burden of adjusting the minor offices fell upon Godolphin, and his letters to Harley will command sympathy.

> I never took such pains in my life to satisfy anybody as Sir Ch. M[usgrave] in every thing from the first moment I spoke to him, but it's pretty hard to follow humours so changeable and uncertain. He would not be in the Ordnance, and when it was too late then he would be. At first he would not be a Teller because it was a sinecure, and afterwards when he had kissed the Queen's hand for it, he would not take it because it was not Mr Palmes's [vacancy]. . . . I wish with all my heart that four or five of these gentlemen that are so sharp set upon other people's places had mine amongst them to stay their stomachs.[1]

Here is a rebuke to Harley's dressed-up letter-writing:

> At first when I saw your hand upon the outside of the enclosed letter it gave me a great deal of satisfaction to think you had forgiven that torrent of impertinence [irrelevance] which dropped from me last night, but when I came to read it I concluded it was an old letter which must have been mislaid by some neglect of my servants.[2]

Marlborough had one other thought about the formation of the Government; and he urged the Queen to call Shrewsbury to her side. Here was the great Whig who would establish the national character of the Government. Since the Fenwick Trial eight years before the Duke of Shrewsbury had escaped from every form of public duty. He had confronted all appeals of King William with his health, affected by the hunting fall, and with his peace of mind, destroyed by worry and the prickings of conscience. He had for some years withdrawn from England and settled himself in Rome,

[1] May 28, 1702, Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 39. [2] May 21, 1702, *ibid.*

where Italian skies, cosmopolitan society, and an ecclesiastical atmosphere soothed his nervous, super-sensitive nature. Shrewsbury was the other big figure which Marlborough required for his arrangements at home. Their established connexion, the anxieties they had both felt about their relations with Saint-Germains, Shrewsbury's vague but vast and durable prestige in English politics, all made his coming into the Government in any office he would like—even the lightest—appropriate and important. Shrewsbury was the Whig he wanted. No partisan could impugn his orthodoxy. No aristocrat could surpass his magnificence. But here Marlborough failed, and his failure condemned him to less good arrangements at home. He had to do without Shrewsbury. Shrewsbury, with many expressions of goodwill, excused himself behind several lines of personal fortification. He preferred an elegant dalliance by the Tiber, and soon fell in love with a widow—an Italian lady of experienced charm—whom he met by its banks. The fact that, although on the friendliest terms with Marlborough, he would not come home and do any work was untoward.

The Queen conceived that she knew as much as anyone about the Church of England, of which she was the supreme head, and was resolved to protect and rule it according to her lights. Godolphin was now undisputed master of the public finances. The armies and the Grand Alliance fell evidently into Marlborough's sphere. But there remained Parliament, and especially the House of Commons, with which the Cockpit must establish a direct relationship. It is noteworthy that the elective assembly was already recognized as the dominant factor in the State. Without its goodwill, or at least its compliance, the authority of the Crown, the cohesion of the allies, and, of course, finance and war would all fall in helpless futility. Who was to manage the House of Commons? Who was to provide this indispensable foundation for the whole action of England? The Crown had inherited from King William at least a hundred members on whom for one cause or another reliance could be placed. These, added to the Tory strength, gave a working majority in this Whig Parliament; and the Whigs themselves could be counted on for the war. There was therefore a considerable accord upon the national issue. But the quarrel of the two parties proceeded all the more fiercely in the numerous fields that still remained open for political combat. Each watched vigilantly for the chance to discredit, trip up, or strike down the other. However the Tory Party was not all one. Its fervent "Highflyers" were

too extravagant for a large number of country gentlemen and moderates, some of whom were in the hands of the Government, but most of them entirely independent. They looked beyond the Tory chiefs in the Cabinet, to Robert Harley, the Speaker and also, as we should say, Leader of the House. To him resorted many of the Whigs in their new distress. There was a great body of members around the Speaker who admired his cautious good sense and moderate views, and were associated with him in all the day-to-day work of Parliament.

Harley was a man of the middle. He represented at this time moderation in its most crafty and efficient form. He was a monument of common sense surrounded by dodges. It had not always been so. Only four years before he had been the leader of the most violent Tory follies against King William. He had voiced the passions of the squires to disband the Army, and establish a Land Bank in opposition to the Bank of England. He said jocularly of himself that it was always his practice "to howl with the wolves, and if his friends wished it, to call black white and white black." Still, he was a man of the middle. He was a Nonconformist who had become a mouthpiece of Anglicanism, without repudiating his original sect. He was a Tory leader who had begun as a Whig and still preserved friendly Whig connexions. He was a strident pacifist and disarmament-monger who now thought that there was much to be said for vigorous participation in the European war. He understood the House of Commons from every angle. At thirty-nine he had been chosen Speaker and in a sense Leader of the House. The Tories considered him their future candidate, and the Whigs would rather have him than any other Tory.

But Harley embodied much more than the contradictions of his career; he was a man of broad and solid ability. He was no seeker for small or near prizes. In vain had William cast the Ministerial bait before him. He seemed with strange shrewdness to seek to represent the central opinion of the Commons without losing contact with the main body of the Tory Party. We may picture him in the Chair hearing confidences from both sides, persuading the one to concede and the other to forbear; and giving when asked advice which suited his general purpose, withal preserving agreeable relations in every quarter. In his desire to dwell at the hub of Parliamentary opinion he had necessarily to use much artifice. He spoke slowly, "with serpentine convolutions, numerous hypotheses, and long involved periods." He performed prodigies of dark and

oracular utterance. It was remarked that the broken and often obscure style of his official letters corresponded with his ambiguous speech. Even his caligraphy conformed. Just as he stuttered and stammered in speaking, so in writing he used to slur and entangle the lines.

No greater disservice can be done to his memory than to read his letters. There is a personal awkwardness about them and a scent of lamp-oil, redolent even after two hundred years. None of the eminent men in England in or out of office wrote quite this kind of letter either to their betters or their clients. It was said of Robert Harley that if he desired anything for himself or another he preferred to knock at the back door even of his closest acquaintance rather than go straight up to the front. For no particular reason but simply out of habit or preference he would take tortuous and secret alleys rather than the street. His supporters said that in managing the parties he would "burrow like a mole and used with great skill a dozen petty underground sources of information"—only regretting there was not a thirteenth.

His frequently disconcerted opponents dubbed him trickster and sharper. They said that his political creed reached its pinnacle in the conviction that power, fortune, and influence were identical with enjoyment. When the factions of the day rose to such extravagant heights a man in a central position needed to protect himself from their fury by an entire scaly apparatus of ruse and ambiguity. That Harley was false to every cause and every man was in a certain sense true; but he was not false to himself, nor to his persistent purpose of steering a middle course for England between many alternating extravagant attitudes and perils. At this juncture he presents himself in his youthful prime as at once the most massive and most artful Parliamentary figure.

Harley was the man whom Marlborough and Godolphin needed in 1702. Here was the means by which they would form a direct contact of their own with the House of Commons. Here was the expert who could advise them upon what that House would or would not do in any situation. Here was the agent who heard everything, and could sway decisions. From the very beginning both these super-Ministers saw in Harley the means of making themselves independent of the ordinary party channels. Rochester and Nottingham might pose and fulminate in the Lords, but Harley could cover a very large body of sober Tory and Whig opinion. It may be said that Marlborough and Harley had this in common, that

in their different spheres they deflected and deceived enemies or wild people into courses which kept England safe. It was certainly upon this basis that they came together.

We have seen Marlborough's relations with Harley growing steadily in the last years of King William, and now strong and ripe. Harley had already an admiration for Marlborough, and was well content to be drawn by him into the elevated circle around the Queen and into the majestic chaos of Europe. He knew, however, that all his value depended on his ability to control or at least sway the Commons and to induce the Tory Party to follow paths of sanity and patriotism. He knew that to lose his influence with these forces would destroy his means alike of service and ambition. He was no simpleton to have his head turned by the courtesy or glitter of the governing group. The advice which he gave to them about the House of Commons, welcome or unwelcome, was expert, and he gave no undertakings which he did not believe he could make good. He so bore himself that it was the Court who courted him. We have only to read his correspondence with Marlborough and the voluminous letters which Godolphin, who understood him and his task even more thoroughly than Marlborough, wrote him week after week to see the importance attached to him and the consideration and regard with which he was treated.

From his unique Parliamentary position Harley soon became, though not actually in the Government, superior in importance to any of the ordinary great office-holders, and Marlborough and Godolphin reached out to him across the Tory Ministers and drew him into their private confidences. Harley was not joined in the Cockpit by those deep ties of personal friendship or family connexion which bound the rest; but he soon became an independent and almost indispensable partner. His own central following in the House of Commons could henceforward feel themselves more closely associated with the conduct of the State through the Speaker working with the great Ministers than by their regular party chiefs in office. For all the toilsome discharge of business Marlborough, Godolphin, and Harley were gradually to become a triumvirate, and were so described by their contemporaries.

We may suppose that the Queen and Marlborough delayed the announcement of Godolphin's appointment until the Tory Ministry was complete. Rochester was allowed to indulge his hopes to the very end. Another great issue had to be settled before they could afford to render him desperate. By solemn pact Marlborough, with

the Queen's authority, had bound England, simultaneously with the Empire and the States-General, to declare war upon France on May 4/15. This secret was in England known only to these two and Godolphin. But now May was at hand. The new Cabinet must be confronted with the decisions of supreme power. Not only must the question of peace or war be settled, but also the kind of war England must wage. Was she to be an ally, playing a full part upon the Continent, or was she to be an associated Power, joined, indeed, to the confederacy against France, but limiting her exertions to picking up what she could overseas on the outskirts of the struggle? Here the collision between Marlborough and Rochester was direct. Rochester seemed to have made much headway with the Queen. He was leading her steadily forward on Tory and party courses. He felt strong enough to meet Marlborough foursquare upon the issue that England must intervene as only an auxiliary.

But Marlborough was found armed with an argument which was judged conclusive in those times. He remarked that by the commands of the Queen, following upon the resolves of Parliament, he had procured the assent of the allies to the additional article denouncing the claim of the pretended Prince of Wales. Here, then, was a major purpose of exclusively English interest to which the other partners in the Grand Alliance had agreed reluctantly at English insistence. England was therefore formally involved as a principal, and must contribute her whole power to the common cause. This contention cut the ground from under the Tory chiefs; for it was they, as we have seen, who in the hope of shattering King William's plan by disgusting the Emperor had brought forward this additional article and made it a test of faith at home and abroad. We now see, a month after, the explanation of Marlborough's vehemence to the Grand Pensionary and Count Goes at The Hague. There is no doubt he looked ahead.

The new Tory Cabinet seem to have been quelled or even rallied by this deployment of their former party demands. Behind lay the growing realization that the Queen, if really forced to choose, would throw her whole weight upon the side of Marlborough and Godolphin. In the end the Queen was not troubled with the dispute. It was agreed that England should throw her whole weight into the war.

On May 4, at one o'clock in the afternoon, the King-at-Arms rode out from the Queen's palace splendidly adorned and surrounded by the heralds and the guards. From St James's he went

by way of Charing Cross and the Strand to the City, where he proclaimed the declaration of war against France to the clash of cymbals and the blare of trumpets. His challenge to Louis XIV was everywhere cheered by the masses and the poorest citizens, the genius of whose race had taught them that their freedom and the greatness of their country were at stake. Two days later, all being now committed to the struggle, Godolphin received the White Staff of Lord Treasurer, and Rochester saw himself finally relegated to his Irish Viceroyalty.

Chapter Four

THE TORY FERMENT

1702—AUGUST

THERE was an extraordinary soreness among the Tories at this time. All the prosperity which seemed to be coming to them in the new reign in no way mollified their general wrath. They could not forgive—they could not even forget—the dissolution of 1701. We can see what a mistake William had made in dissolving the Tory Parliament and yet keeping his Tory Ministry until the elections were over. By this he had fallen between both stools. He had forgotten Machiavelli's sombre remark that "men can resent small injuries, but not graver ones." The Tory Party had been mortally offended by his action, while the Whigs on whom he was counting had only half a chance. This was the kind of error, heating to men's minds and obvious to all politicians, from which Marlborough and Godolphin had struggled almost passionately to save him. It had left King William in the final year of his life in one of the most uncomfortable positions of his reign.

His last act with his Whig Ministers had been to affix his stamp—he could no longer sign his name—to the Abjuration Bill. This measure which passed triumphantly through Parliament expressed the immediate reaction of the nation against Louis XIV's recognition of the Pretender. It declared the whole exiled house permanently deprived of royal rights. Now, here was a grave matter. Although in the mood of the hour the Tories had found it a difficult proposal to dispute, they resented it bitterly. Since the beginning of William's reign and as the result of the combination of the two great parties against James II, the question of principle about the succession had slumbered under a mask of "national emergency" which enabled every High Tory to serve loyally a *de facto* Parliamentary King. But the Abjuration Act cut at the very root of the whole Tory conception of legitimacy and Divine Right. The fact that this had been thrust down their throats upon an impulse of anger at Louis's intrusion left them only the more outraged.

Moreover, these Tories, still unappeased, felt themselves morally in the ascendant. All the themes for which they stood were in tune with the popular mood. In our modern politics we see how hard lines of division can be drawn between different shades of the same opinion. Thus Socialists have an affinity and sentiment for Communists, but make a frontier against them and fight them vigorously. Something similar to these relations ruled between the irreconcilable Jacobites and the constitutional Tory Party with Queen Anne at its head. And it is also to be remarked in those days, as in these, that when the mood of the nation changes all the groups and parties of the Right or of the Left suffer or prosper together. The victory of the moderates on either side carries with it a new impulse to the passions and ideals of their own extremists.

With the death of William and with the accession of a Tory Stuart Queen, Jacobite sentiment, which lay low and deep throughout England, and stirred in so many hearts and consciences, surged forward and became the fashion and temper of the hour. Even in his lifetime, according to Burnet, a certain Dr Binckes had preached a sermon before the Convocation "in which he drew a parallel between King Charles's sufferings and those of our Saviour, and," says the Bishop, "in some very indecent expressions gave the preference to the former."[1] These emotions found their expression, curiously enough, in loyalty to the new monarch, who in her own person and in the most effective manner barred the return of the lawful Prince, and but for the warming-pan—now much battered—made a mockery of all the theories of Divine Right. However, an indifference to logic where it is likely to lead to serious trouble is one of the strongest of English characteristics. Here at last was a sovereign of Stuart blood, of Tory inclinations, and happily a fervent adherent of the Church of England. All Tory England was ready to make the best of that. Many Non-jurors, reconciled by the arrival of an undoubted Stuart upon the throne, were willing to be rallied. The mass of the Tory Party, laity and clergy, felt that this was not only a way out of their difficulties, but at least a partial vindication of their principles. Anyhow, Queen Anne was an immense improvement upon a foreign Calvinist King, imported by the Whigs.

At this moment in our history, therefore, all the Tory forces, from those who regarded Anne regretfully as a usurper to those who acclaimed her as a supreme blessing vouchsafed by heaven,

[1] Burnet, v, 16.

swelled together in an incongruous yet not an unexplainable harmony. Throughout every circle and degree Toryism was bitter and aggressive; while the Whigs, for their part, were thrown into the embarrassing position of being roughly assaulted by the Government whose main policy on the greatest issues of the age—Europe and the war—was their own.

We have therefore this Tory Party, so intractable and unyielding in character, so unreasoning and narrow in outlook, equally conscious in the highest degree of their grievances and of their power. This is the first great political fact in the reign of Queen Anne. By the Acts passed on the morrow of the Fenwick Plot Parliament was prudently no longer dissolved on the demise of the Crown, but continued automatically for six months and no more. Whig hopes that the House of Commons elected in 1701 would be allowed to run its normal course never had any foundation. The law prescribed and the Queen desired a dissolution. In the late summer there must be a general election, and the Tories, already possessed of office, eagerly looked forward to overthrowing their Whig antagonists, who stoutly prepared for resistance. In this delectable sport nearly all the time and the thought of England was occupied without much regard being paid to the impending general clash of arms in Europe.

Nowadays a Government is usually an expression of the previous general election; but in this nascent phase of our Parliamentary institutions the Crown first gathered certain Ministers and interests around it, and then tried by every means in its power to procure a House of Commons which would support its general policy. The weight of the Crown and the Government was formidable at the elections. Lord-Lieutenants, magistrates, sheriffs, squires, and parsons influenced, and frequently over-influenced, both the gathering and the counting of the votes. To all this there was added the deep loyalty of the people to the sovereign, and the reluctance of the ordinary elector to cast a vote against the policy of his lawful ruler. Thus the Government of the day, enjoying the fresh flush of royal favour, had a marked advantage at the polls. The character of the Ministry made it unmistakably plain that the Queen wanted a Tory Parliament. The Tories were seen to be favoured; the Whigs were obviously under a cloud. Moreover, this inclination of the royal will corresponded with the natural sentiment in favour of change and against the agents of the late unpopular King.

The party fight shaped itself as the dying Parliament drew towards

its end. The parties girded at each other, and marshalled the points of malice and prejudice upon which they relied at the impending trial of strength. Sir Edward Seymour remarked from the Ministerial bench that the Queen's generosity showed "that she was wholly English at heart. Governments had been known from which such help could not have been expected even in the greatest calamity." Lord Spencer, the old Sunderland's son and Marlborough's son-in-law, made the telling and even decisive rejoinder, "That King William had not an English heart can be said by none save those who have a French one." This turned the tables with a vengeance. Every Jacobite, every pacifist, every isolationist in the Tory ranks felt himself smitten. The "English heart" topic was dropped as a counter in the House of Commons' debates.

Another shape taken by the party fight was the attempt by Rochester to oust all minor Whig officials.

> It was generally believed that the Earl of Rochester and his party were for severe methods, and for a more entire change, to be carried quite through all subaltern appointments; but that the Lord Godolphin and the Earl of Marlborough were for more moderate proceedings.[1]

The Tories in the House of Commons, with the encouragement of their representatives in the Cabinet, sought to envelop all the transactions of William's reign with the taint of corruption and fraud. In these days many new fortunes seemed to be made and great estates acquired without sufficient explanation. The Tories were the champions of peace, of parsimony, and of financial purity in public life. With the favour of the Crown and its Ministers they pursued the Whig members of King William's Governments. The Earl of Ranelagh was accused of peculation, and immense expectations were aroused of the exposures which the Parliamentary inquiry would make. In fact, however, though irregularities had occurred, the inquisition yielded very much less than was feared, or, should we say, hoped.

Another incident throws a revealing light upon the Queen's party bias. A story was set on foot that the late King and his Ministers had deliberately planned—"conspired," it had now become—to bring in the Electoral Prince of Hanover and exclude Princess Anne from the throne. It was further alleged that the assent of the Emperor and the Dutch Republic to the plan had actually been

[1] Burnet, v, 12.

procured. These ideas had certainly been mooted, and we remember how Marlborough had said, "If ever they attempt it, we would walk over their bellies."[1] Now everything stood in a different light. Nothing could be more damaging to the Whigs than the suggestion that they had sought to stand between the 'English-hearted' Queen, for whom there was so much enthusiasm, and her lawful right. And, of course, it could be suggested that as an essential feature Anne must have become a prisoner of State in the Tower. The Whigs denied these aspersions with vehemence. The Earl of Carlisle, Deputy-Hereditary Marshal of England, and as a Lord of the Treasury one of the remaining Whig Ministers, demanded an immediate inquiry. Five lords, of whom Marlborough was one, were commanded by the Queen to "visit the late king's papers" and "to bring her such of them as related to alliances or to the succession of the Crown." The five lords reported that, having searched the King's papers, they had found nothing to justify such accusations; and the House of Lords, where the Whigs commanded a majority, proceeded to stigmatize the authors of scandalous untruths, which, they said, besmirched the memory of a great King and exposed his servants and friends to national opprobrium. They sent a deputation, of whom Lord Carlisle was one, to the Queen. Anne received their address. But after the deputation withdrew she directed an equerry to recall Lord Carlisle. She then observed, "I have to inform you that I intend to make other arrangements about the Treasury." In these terms, on this occasion, and in this connexion, another of the Whigs was dismissed. Thus the Queen seemed to show herself no friend to those who had been injured by what was admitted to be lying rumour. Her frowns were reserved for those who had protested against it, and were still to suffer from it. Burnet says:

> When the falsehood of those calumnies was apparent, then it was given out, with an unusual confidence, that no such reports had been ever set about; though the contrary was evident, and the thing was boldly asserted . . .: so that a peculiar measure of assurance was necessary, to face down a thing, which they [the Tories] had taken such pains to infuse into the minds of the credulous vulgar, all England over.[2]

In Marlborough's absence at The Hague Rochester, venerable, furious, absentee from Ireland, wove the Queen into Tory electioneering. On May 25 she dismissed King William's Parliament with

[1] *Cf.* Vol. I, p. 482.

[2] Burnet, v, 15–16.

the blistering passage, "I shall be very careful to preserve and maintain the Act of Toleration and to set the minds of all my people at quiet. My own principles must always keep me entirely firm to the interests and religion of the Church of England, *and will incline me to countenance those who have the truest zeal to support it.*"[1] To the Whigs this was a declaration of war upon them by the Sovereign. All the popularity and prestige of the new Queen Anne, with her English heart, were to be marshalled at the hustings against them. At the same time their Tory opponents before the election proclaimed a measure against Occasional Conformity which would make every Dissenter a political outlaw. What had they done, the Whigs exclaimed, to be treated as public enemies? They were the force which had made the Revolution of 1688. They were the men who by the Act of Settlement had placed the Queen upon the throne. They were the traditional champions against the Jacobitism and Popery which everybody condemned, or affected to condemn. They were the party which earnestly supported the war Lord Marlborough had gone abroad to wage. And the Whigs were half the nation! Wherein had their conduct failed the Queen and Constitution? The future and the freedom of England rested in their midst Why, then, was their loyalty so spurned? Because, said they, there was some dark intrigue to bring in the pretended Prince of Wales and subjugate England to Rome and France. But the Tories replied that the Whigs were all republicans and atheists at heart, who paid lip-service to the Crown in order to devour it, and took the Holy Sacrament to qualify for positions from which they could the better destroy, not only the Church of England, but all faith of man in God. On these agreeable platforms Whigs and Tories proceeded to the polls.

However, the fibre of both parties was tough. The election of August 1702 was no landslide. Just as the Tories had come through the election of February 1701 much better than they themselves expected in the circumstances, so now the Whigs made a stubborn fight and were perhaps not more than a hundred behind the Tories in the first Parliament of Queen Anne. Harley, the Tory leader, was again elected Speaker; this time unanimously. His Parliamentary gifts and ascendancy commended him to the House as a whole. His moderation comforted the Whigs. His party colouring just held the Tories. Across the gulfs of a Tory majority and Government and the disfavour of the Crown the Whigs could regard him

[1] Boyer, i, 42.

as a link with Marlborough and Godolphin, the national Ministers above the ebb and flow of party. For the rest they remained effective, weighty—almost half the nation—organized with a grip inconceivable to-day. Moreover, they were still entrenched in strong positions both in Church and State.

Although in William's reign there had been Tory Governments and moderate or pliable Tory Ministers, the whole bias of the Crown had been to secure the ascendancy of the Whigs in the peerage, in the Church, and in the Judiciary. There was a Whig majority in the House of Lords. The judges had been chosen as King William's men. The bishops were nearly all Whigs and Broad Churchmen. Joined with the Whig nobles, they dominated the Upper House of Convocation. These advantages at the summit were reproduced in a lesser degree throughout the kingdom in many aspects of local life, and determined Whigs were found stubbornly rooted in every kind of parochial and municipal office. Thus the victorious and elated Tories, with, as they could claim, the favour of the Crown, the will of the electors, and the mood of the times on their side, found themselves confronted with a solid array ready to encounter them at every point.

The first Parliament of the new reign was therefore the scene and occasion of a fierce and not unevenly matched struggle between the nominees of the old reign and the aspirants of the new. If the Tories had a majority in the Commons the Whigs ruled in the Lords. If the rank and file of the Church of England priesthood (recruited from what were then the virtually religious seminaries of Oxford and Cambridge) were ardent Tories, rank High Churchmen, and in many cases, if the truth were known, Jacobites and Divine Right men at heart, the bishops and the Upper House of Convocation were Latitudinarians. If the country squires, "the gentlemen of England," as they called themselves, were predominantly Tory, against them rose the new expanding power of the City, with its far-spreading mercantile and financial interests, ardent for the Whigs and the war. Thus conflict showed itself simultaneously between Whigs and Tories, between Churchmen and Dissenters, between Lords and Commons, between the bishops and their clergy, and between agriculture and commerce. Nor could these conditions be readily altered. Vacancies occurred rarely in the Bench of Bishops or among the judges. The peerage was permanent and irremovable. Even minor Whig functionaries and notables, backed by all the wealth, learning, and activity of a great party, could not be evicted without

some reason. If these positions were to be captured some method must be found. And here the Tory Party had the inspiration of the Occasional Conformity Bill.

During the whole of the reign Church politics was the strongest theme at home. The cry "The Church in danger" represented all the sentiments, principles, prejudices, interests, and tactics of Toryism. There had been a time, not long before, when the great Halifax had written his "Letter to a Dissenter" to show how much Church and Chapel had in common against Rome. But once Popery was no more a menace, High Church Tories were free to turn their full antagonism against Dissent. They saw in Ireland William's late favouring of Presbyterians. They saw a Presbyterian Church established in Scotland. Above all, they saw Dissenters holding many positions of power in England. All these religious animosities revived and grew monstrously. They enabled the Tories to make a resolute solid set against the Whigs, and put the Whigs in a great difficulty and disadvantage, especially as they were bound to support the war.

Under the laws of England as they had been administered in King William's reign no attempt had been made to persecute Nonconformists for worshipping as they pleased, and a very wide measure of practical toleration existed for the people. Even Papists were not molested, if they behaved discreetly. But where the holding of public office was concerned it was argued that no one ought to be trusted to enforce the laws who disagreed with them on grounds of conscience. Office-holders of all kinds from the highest Minister to the smallest revenue officer—Lord-Lieutenants, magistrates, all who would be concerned with elections, every one who sat in either House, the heads of all colleges and universities, nearly every one charged with the education of youth—all these must by law be communicant members of the Church of England. The Corporation Act and the Test Act prescribed that no one could hold any of these key-posts without taking the sacrament according to Anglican rites. But the wealthy, influential Dissenters who formed so valuable a part of the Whig forces, who by their standing, substance, and capacity were qualified for public office, were not so easily to be ejected or shut out from power by the manœuvres of their political and religious opponents. With the full assent of Whig and Nonconformist opinion, they had been accustomed by King William's goodwill to turn the flank of the Test Act by taking the Anglican sacrament as required by law, and thereafter continuing in their

Dissenting tabernacles. This attitude of compromise was accepted by their co-religionists and party friends, who were fully alive to the importance of their having a share in the public functions, which again were so helpful in all elections.

Here, then, was a widespread practice, enjoined by the custom of a decade, which the law could not punish—nay, which conformed most strictly to its letter. The practice ran in high places: and here again lay the strength of the Whigs. Even Harley, or at least his family, were only Occasional Conformers; and the Queen's husband, Prince George, had his private Lutheran chapel in the palace, and partook of the Anglican sacrament but once a year.

The Tories, on the wave of Jacobite, Stuart, and Church emotion evoked by the accession of Queen Anne, and not unmindful of the vacancies which would be created, determined to bring this fraudulent abuse, as they regarded it, to an end. One can hardly conceive an issue better adapted to make a quarrel. Genuine religious feeling was outraged at the spectacle of prominent, well-established men by hundreds publicly taking the sacrament in a form which they were known to dislike. Party politicians were infuriated at their keeping by so paltry a device the offices which they sought for themselves or their friends. The whole Tory Party thought the practice wicked, blasphemous, deceitful, an outrage upon the body and blood of Christ, and also extremely inconvenient at election times. The Whigs rejoined that there was and ought to be toleration in the realm, if not among Christians, at least among Protestants; and that no country, least of all one so grievously threatened, could afford to deprive itself of the aid of large and powerful classes of loyal, well-to-do, and God-fearing citizens: that no sovereign should divorce herself from so great a body of her subjects and ban them from all share in her service. Then the religious leaders of Nonconformity came forward declaring that there was no irreverence or dishonour in a Dissenter taking the Anglican sacrament, while at the same time preferring for his ordinary devotions to enter the House of the Lord or to come to His Table in his own way. The Anglican sacrament, they declared, was not in their eyes inherently wrong or obnoxious. They understood, respected, and in large measure shared the feelings of those to whom it was most dear. No question of faith or even of doctrine arose which should utterly sunder Christian men. It was a matter of mode, outlook, and temperament which our advancing civilization should comprehend. And here they were endorsed by William's Broad Church Bishops

—Burnet and the rest—and by the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. Thus a great volume of practical good sense and high spiritual authority, marshalled and sustained by the Whig nobles, met the Tory demand front to front.

But the dominant party was not to be easily denied, and their pertinacious, passionate, ruthless exertions to root out Occasional Conformity and punish those guilty of it, far outstripping the world war and Marlborough's victories, became during the opening years of Queen Anne's reign the main issue and topic of English political life.

After the Church the second party cleavage of the reign was upon the character of the war. We have already seen this brought to an issue in the Cabinet. For many generations, even down to our own day, there have been two sets of opinions about the kind of wars that England should wage: the first for playing a great and direct part on the Continent; the second for using our island position and naval power to gather trade and possessions overseas. The difference showed itself very plainly in King Charles's reign in the dispute about whether we should retain Dunkirk or Tangier—a bridgehead on the Continent or a gateway to the Mediterranean. Neither party has adhered throughout its history to one view. Whigs and Tories have exchanged sides several times as the compulsion of events led the Government of the day into particular action and the Opposition gravitated towards the contrary group of ideas.

But these two conceptions of war seemed quite distinct; and at this time the Tories obstinately championed the policy that if we were drawn into a war we should go as little to the Continent, send as few troops, fight as near to the coast as possible, and endeavour to secure territory and traffic across the oceans. Whigs, on the contrary, dwelt upon the theory familiar to us as the doctrine of "the decisive theatre," and sought, with the largest army that could be maintained, to bring the war to an end by a thrust at the heart of France, the supreme military antagonist, arguing that thereafter all the rest would be added unto them.

It should be noticed that the Tories favoured the popular idea that the Navy should be the stronger and the Army stinted. This gave them a good constitutional position as against the Whigs, who, though equally opposed to a standing army, had to have one if they wished to fight on the mainland. Here was a new cause of confusion. As the reign of Anne continued these opinions organized

themselves, to a degree almost unbelievable, in hard-and-fast party principles about the kind of strategy and operations which should be adopted. The Tories were prone to judge every action not so much by whether it was successful as by whether it was in accordance with their party doctrine. Thus taking a town near the coast was more to be applauded than taking one farther inland. Thus an action at sea was preferable to one ashore. The Tory policy leaned to operations against Spain and the liquidation of the Spanish colonies as a prize of war, and to the entry of the Mediterranean with all the exploitation of trade in the East that would come with the command of the sea. Marlborough's march to Blenheim was therefore, as we shall find, the greatest violation of Tory principles which could be conceived. Even dazzling success could hardly redeem such a departure from the orthodox and conventional party method of waging war.

Marlborough throughout his campaigns was bound, apart from military facts and the enemy, to consider the character of any operation by the effect it would have on Tory opinion in the House of Commons. Both parties could use powerful and capacious arguments in support of their dogmas, and neither hesitated to turn the fortunes and accidents of the war to its special account. From this it followed again that not only were victories in the field or afloat classified as Whig and Tory victories, but the officers concerned in specific operations became coloured with the party hue. Generals and admirals were encouraged to have strong party affiliations, and each faction had its favourites whom it praised and defended through thick and thin. Indeed, neither side in Parliament hesitated to foment rivalries and jealousies among the commanders and to set one against another, or against their commander-in-chief. From this again we see how vital it was to Marlborough that he should have Godolphin at the Treasury; otherwise he might find his strategy in the face of the enemy hamstrung by money being granted for one operation and refused for another. It was equally necessary to him that no one serving under his command should be appointed except by and through his authority. The slightest weakening of the principle that he alone governed all promotions and appointments would in the party commotion have thrown the whole of his forces and of his plans into disorder.

Chapter Five

THE STRUCTURE OF THE WAR

1701–1712

ALTHOUGH Eugene's brilliant campaign in Italy had opened the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701, no shot had been fired in the northern theatre. In Flanders, upon the Rhine, and upon the Moselle armies had assembled, and each of the great combatants was busy securing smaller allies. Louis XIV had, as we have seen, acquired partial control of the Archbishopric of Cologne and the Bishopric of Liége at the same time as he had occupied the Belgian fortresses.[1] The first overt act of the Germanic states was the coercion of the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. This prince was a mere figurehead whose younger brother had collected in his name, but with French gold, an army of twelve thousand mercenaries, and was forming a league of French supporters in North Germany. The Elector of Hanover at length intervened. During the night of March 20 the younger brother was driven out by Hanoverian troops, and the mercenaries agreed to serve henceforth under the Emperor. This was the first war news which reached Queen Anne after her accession.

Marlborough had arranged that on May 4/15 war should be simultaneously declared upon France by England, the States-General, and the Empire. This event finally reassured the Dutch, who hitherto, despite Marlborough's firm assertions, had feared that their island ally intended only to act as an accessory—*i.e.*, to pick up what was good for herself at the expense of friend and foe. The causes of England's quarrel were set forth in a proclamation which is a model of forceful historical compression. Its conclusion should be noted.

> We henceforth strictly forbid the holding of any correspondence or communication with France or Spain or their subjects. But because there are remaining in our Kingdoms many of the subjects of France and Spain, We do declare our Royal intention to be, that all the subjects of France and Spain, who shall demean themselves dutifully towards us, shall be safe in their persons and estates.[2]

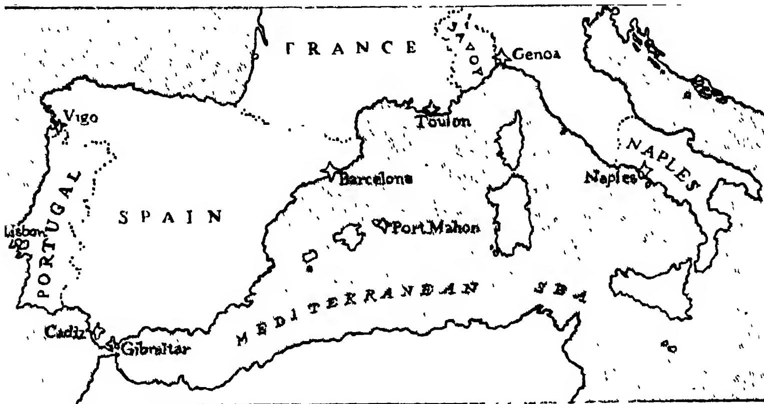
[1] Vol. I, p. 232. [2] Boyer, i, 31.

This passage will jar the modern mind. We see how strong was the structure of Christendom in these times and with what restraints even warring nations acted. Of course, nowadays, with the many improvements that have been made in international morals and behaviour, all enemy subjects, even those whose countries were only technically involved, even those who had lived all their lives in England, and the English women who had married them, would, as in every other state based on an educated democracy, be treated within twenty-four hours as malignant foes, flung into internment camps, and their private property stolen to assist the expenses of the war. In the twentieth century mankind has shaken itself free from all those illogical, old-world prejudices, and achieved the highest efficiency of brutal, ruthless war.

We shall see that the same kind of archaic conduct ruled in the field. After the fury of battle was spent both sides, and especially the victors, laboured to rescue the wounded, instead of leaving them to perish inch by inch in agony in No Man's Land. If in their poverty they stripped the dead of their clothing, they also exchanged prisoners with meticulous accounting. The opposing generals paid each other every compliment and courtesy which did not hamper their operations, and in the winter season issued passports to prominent officers to traverse hostile territory on their shortest routes home. Although the great causes in dispute were stated with a robust vigour and precision which we have now lost, no hatred, apart from military antagonism, was countenanced among the troops. All was governed by strict rules of war, into which bad temper was not often permitted to enter. The main acceptances of a polite civilization still reigned across the lines of opposing armies, and mob violence and mechanical propaganda had not yet been admitted to the adjustment of international disputes.

Since from this time forward military affairs must play a main part in our story, the reader should survey the whole scope of the war, and consider the governing conditions under which it was fought. As in the recent world war, two great European countries, one much weaker than the other, found themselves lapped about and almost encircled by a numerous alliance of which England was the mainspring, and by the sea, of which she was already the mistress. The kingdoms of France and Spain were in a central position in 1702 similar to that of Germany and Austria in 1914. They had the advantage of interior lines and could strike outward in various directions. They could throw their weight now against this oppo-

nent, now against that. All their fortunes depended upon an army, incomparable in power, numbers, organization, and repute, and upon the authority of its War Lord. Spain throughout followed the guidance of Louis XIV in the same subordination that in our days Austria observed to Germany. Louis XIV, like the Kaiser William II and his general staff, at the beginning could choose for each campaign where the decisive theatre should lie. He could perfect his plans in secrecy, and execute them without any domestic hindrance.



MEDITERRANEAN NAVAL BASES

The allies, so loosely and precariously joined together, among whom communication was slow and slender, were liable to be struck down one after the other.

The command of the sea rested throughout in the hands of England and Holland. Queen Anne had above two hundred ships of war—half of them of over fifty guns and "fit to lie in the line"—manned by forty or fifty thousand sailors and marines. To these the Dutch joined three ships to every English five. The French were scarcely half of this combined strength. They never attempted seriously to dispute the Narrow Seas or the Channel. Their frigates and privateers maintained themselves upon the oceans; but for the rest their aim was to preserve the control of the Mediterranean. Until the allies could alter this King Louis was only partially enveloped, and still had the advantage of striking where he chose. On the other hand, the fact of having to defend simultaneously so many ports and potential landing-places from amphibious attack was a serious drain on French man-power.

A prevailing purpose of Marlborough's strategy was to secure the command of the Mediterranean. But this did not depend upon ships alone. Cadiz, Gibraltar, Barcelona, Toulon, Genoa, Naples, and Port Mahon, all the great fortified harbours of the inland sea and its approaches, were held by the Two Crowns, and Lisbon was neutral. The battleships of those days, dependent only upon the winds for movement, could keep the sea for five or six months, or more; but the dangers of crossing the Bay of Biscay and entering the mouth of the English Channel amid the winter gales were fearful; and without fresh meat, green vegetables, and intervals of repose ashore the mortality among the sailors was grievous. It was little use sending the fleet to the Mediterranean only for June and July. A secure harbour and well-equipped dockyard, where the ships could be careened, repaired, and replenished, and where the crews could be eased and refreshed, were indispensable. The search for this dockyard dominated the policy of the Cabinet and of the Admiralty. Although temporary resting-places were found by diplomacy at Lisbon in 1703 and by the conquests of Gibraltar and Barcelona in 1704 and 1705, it was not until 1708, after the Italian theatre had ceased to count, that a secure, well-equipped base for the fleet was established at Port Mahon, in the island of Minorca. Meanwhile year by year the Cabinet forced the Admiralty and the naval commanders to run undue risks by going out early and coming home late in the season, and much suffering and loss of ships and life followed therefrom.

The employment of the Navy was as usual divided between furthering the main purposes of the war and trade protection. Naval opinion and the whole mercantile interest wished to set trade protection first; but this was not the view of the Government, nor of Parliament. Whigs and Tories alike wished the fleet to be used as part of the main war-effort. Marlborough directly, and through his brother, Admiral Churchill, at the Admiralty, pressed in this direction; and certainly in the War of the Spanish Succession the energies of the fleet were devoted to fighting purposes and the main war-plans in a far higher degree than ever before or since. Sir George Rooke, the Admiral of the Fleet, was the chief opponent of this view. He resisted at every stage and by every means the policy of trying to dominate the Mediterranean. Arrogant, crafty, obstinately entangled in his own tackle, and afflicted with persistent ill-health, he saw no prize worth the risk and trouble in securing an overseas base on the Iberian Peninsula; still less was he attracted by the prospect of such a base being used to draw the main fleet

into the Mediterranean. The Tory Admiral was a sluggish, wary man whose imagination had no room for great designs, and who was forced by circumstances and accident into the achievements which have rendered him famous. Shovell, Fairborne, Leake, Norris, and others were far more daring, vigorous admirals, and lent themselves more readily to the wishes of the Executive and the general purposes of the war.

If the allies were to rid themselves of the peril of being attacked in detail they must wrest the initiative from Louis XIV, and by dominant action at one point or another rivet the attention of the central mass. The paths by which France could be invaded were not so numerous as might appear. Roads were few and bad, and in the absence of railways all the natural obstacles of forests, mountains, and barren regions asserted their full power. Armies of from sixty to a hundred thousand men could only live by moving constantly through fertile lands or where their supplies could be brought them by fresh or salt water. The great rivers were the railways of this war. The control of the long, uninterrupted course of rivers and canals enabled armies to operate in their full power, drawing their food and ammunition easily to them week by week and moving their siege trains. But for this very reason every river and canal, especially the confluences and junctions, was barred by strong. elaborate fortresses, each of which had to be separately captured, The value of every fortress and the cost of taking it in time, life, and money were measured with high exactness on both sides; two months for this, a month for that; a fortnight for a small place, and three or four days for a mere castle. Thus the rivers represented the lines of railways, and the stations on them were forts barring all traffic to those who held them not.

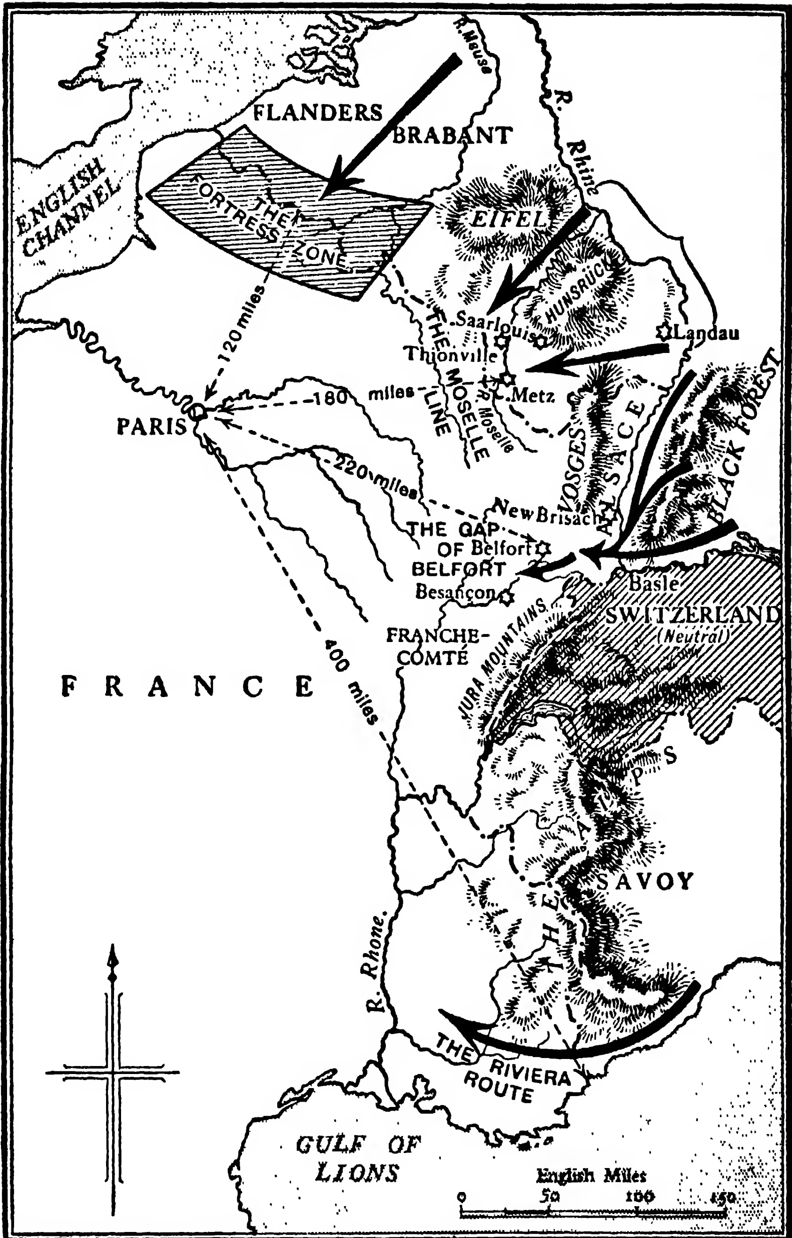
The shipping resources of the two Maritime Powers, relatively large though they were, their harbours, quays, and port accommodation, were never sufficient to make the invasion of France possible by any sea-borne army likely to overcome so mighty and war-like a state. Raids and diversions of all kinds could be considered in their place, but our ancestors never believed that a grand and decisive stroke would be launched upon France from the sea.

There were, however, three or four practicable lines of invasion open to the allies. In the south there was the Riviera road. An army might work its way slowly from Italy into France along the coast, being fed and helped by its ships from port to port. This was a plan which several times attracted Prince Eugene. However, the

invader would enter France at an immense distance from Paris, and in provinces the loss of which, though fertile, would not affect the war-making strength of Louis XIV. From the Mediterranean northward for more than three hundred miles France was protected by the enormous confusion of the Alps and the robust neutrality of the Swiss. A second line of invasion was offered in the gap between the Jura Mountains in the north of Switzerland and the southern spurs of the Vosges. This road was obstructed by a French fortress system of some strength comprising New Brisach, constructed by Vauban, Belfort, Besançon, and other strong places. North of this gap again France was protected for another hundred miles by the triple obstacles of the Black Forest, itself almost a mountain-range, the Rhine, and the Vosges Mountains, one behind the other. The third route was through Northern Alsace or along the Moselle, converging on the French fortress group Saarlouis, Thionville, and Metz. This was generally believed to be the surest and most deadly, and, if Marlborough had found it possible to marshal the effective strength of Germany behind him, it was the pathway he would certainly have made his own.

Lastly there were the plains of Flanders, fertile, populous, intersected by their great and magnificent rivers and canals, offering every facility to the movements of the largest armies and enabling the two Maritime Powers to act in the closest harmony. But this area was covered by immense systems of fortification. More than thirty large fortresses of the first class, complete from outworks to citadel, and perhaps fifty fortified towns and strongholds, the work of two generations, formed artificial barriers between France and Holland. At the time when Marlborough's campaign began nearly all these fortress-towns were in the hands of France. All the fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands had, as we have seen, been seized by Louis XIV in 1701. All the fortresses on the Meuse and Rhine, with one remarkable exception, had passed to the French by the seduction of the priestly rulers of Cologne and Liége. Thus the Dutch began the war deprived of virtually the whole of their barrier and of all the strong places they had held in the time of King William. They had a few fortresses like Nimwegen and Bergen-op-Zoom in their own land, but for the rest they must rely solely upon the manhood of their armies.

The exception was Maestricht. This very large fortress on the Meuse lay in an enclave of Dutch territory. It had not been affected either by the transfer of the Spanish Netherlands or by that of the



FRANCE: PATHS OF INVASION

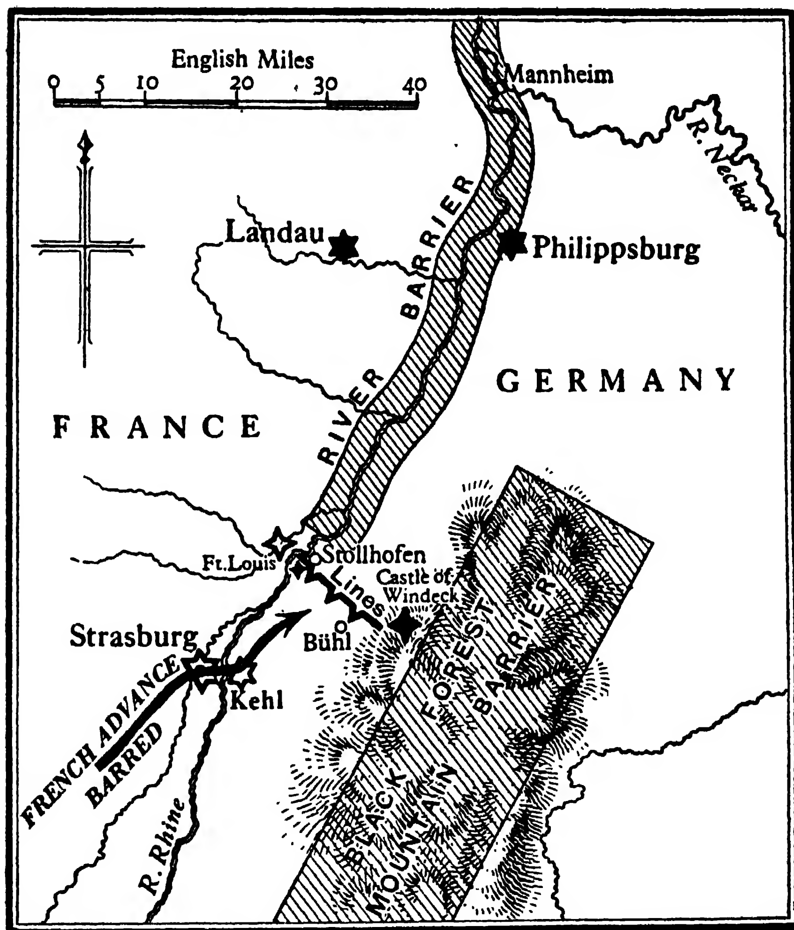
Bishoprics of Cologne and Liége. It was a fortress of the first order, of historic fame and modernized defences. Within its earthworks the Dutch had gathered immense supplies, very considerable stores, and a trustworthy garrison of no less than fourteen thousand men.

The French, on the other hand, had as their second line the great fortresses within the French frontier, and thus enjoyed both their own defences and those which should properly have belonged to their opponents. Thus at the outset of the new war the French had the control of the Scheldt and all its tributaries, of the Meuse (excepting Maestricht), and of long stretches of the Rhine and the Upper Rhine. Finally, Louis had constructed in 1701 a continuous line of fortifications along a seventy-miles crescent from Antwerp to Namur. These "Lines of Brabant" had been sited under Vauban's supervision by the best French engineers; and entrenchments, palisades, and inundations, all vigilantly watched, offered an unbroken defensive position, on any sector of which the French field army could confront an assailant from the north.

During 1701 the attitude of the Germanic princes was ill-defined. They were taking precautions and raising forces; but they were for the most part indisposed either to succour the Emperor, as their antiquated feudal fealty required, or to declare war upon France. In these circumstances the Margrave of Baden, whose domains around Rastadt, between the Upper Rhine and the Neckar, were very near the conflagration, was a personage of high importance. At the head of the Imperial armies he had gained several notable victories over the Turks in bygone years. He was reputed an accomplished soldier, and was certainly a man of proved physical courage. As a ruling prince he was prepared to lead troops of his own against the French. It was natural, therefore, that he should receive the command of whatever Imperial armies should be assembled to to defend Germany. He thus appears at the outset of the war as the first general of the Empire.

During the autumn and winter of 1701 the Margrave busied himself with the defence of the Black Forest and the valley of the Upper Rhine. He aroused considerable enthusiasm among the German populations threatened by French invasion, especially in the circles of Swabia and Franconia. He organized local militias, supported by the inhabitants of the towns and villages, to aid the regular troops which were gradually coming into the field. For further protection he constructed a number of fortified lines barring

the least difficult tracks through the Black Forest. But the most important strategic task which he accomplished was the creation of the celebrated Lines of Stollhofen. These fortifications ran from the river to the wooded mountains, and barred a French advance from



THE LINES OF STOLLHOFEN

the Strassburg bridgeheads down the Rhine valley on the right bank of the river. They covered a front of about nine miles from a strong star-fort opposite Fort Louis, through Stollhofen and Bühl to the castle of Windeck on the wooded heights. These lines were of great strength, and took full advantage of the marshes and other obstacles. In places they were continuous, and protected by deep, broad ditches

filled with water. The system seems to have been extremely well conceived for its purpose. During the whole of the war the French never felt themselves strong enough to attempt the crossing of the Rhine below the Lines of Stollhofen. The project was frequently discussed; but the risks which an invading army would run during, and still more after, the passage of the broad, rapid river, proved in practice a complete deterrent. So also were the mountains and forests on which the left of the lines rested. A frontal attack upon the fortifications, if they were adequately garrisoned, seemed a hazardous and certainly a very costly major operation. It was not until 1707 that Marshal Villars captured them by a brilliant and almost bloodless surprise. Thus the Lines of Stollhofen played a most serviceable part throughout the early critical years of the war, and their construction must be regarded as a military measure of rare discrimination and of the highest value.

In nearly every great war there is some new mechanical feature introduced the early understanding of which confers important advantages. Military opinion is naturally rigid. Men held in the grip of discipline, moving perilously from fact to fact and staking their lives at every step, are nearly always opposed to new ideas. For more than forty years the flintlock had been in actual use in Europe. Its superiority over the matchlock, with its fuse and delayed, uncertain discharge, was only very gradually recognized. As early as 1660 the English Guards had the flintlock. The Dutch haltingly followed this example. The French were the most conservative of all. During the campaigns of King William the flintlock was gaining acceptance and displacing the matchlock in all the armies, but last of all in the French. Nevertheless the difference between the two patterns of musket, though, as we might think, slight and feeble, carried with it for those who had the seeing eye a decisive change in infantry tactics and in the rôle of infantry upon the battlefield. This change was facilitated by the invention of a ring-bayonet which was fastened around the muzzle of the musket instead of blocking it by being screwed inside it. The infantry soldier by this device—which he owed to General Mackay's reflections upon Killicrankie—became at once pikeman and musketeer. At the same time the improved fire of the flintlock made the function of musketeer increasingly important. Infantry armed with the flintlock and the ring-bayonet could develop a volley-fire of a destructiveness both to horse and foot hitherto unknown. During

King William's wars these conditions already existed, but they were not consciously applied by any of the combatants.

Marlborough used this new fact. When he became Commander-in-Chief his root conception of infantry was not a thing that stood, but a thing that fired. The flintlock was by now universally adopted in the armies of the Sea Powers, and to a very large extent in Germany and the Empire. All Marlborough's training of infantry was directed to developing fire. He used frequently to parade large bodies of infantry and practise them in firing. Whereas a French company fired rank by rank, Marlborough's troops fired platoon by platoon, thus assuring the control of the officer commanding the platoon over the volley and the reloading. Fire discipline was already one of the established bases of his thought. All his handling of infantry was governed by the desire to develop precise, regular volley-firing by platoons, and to deploy lines of infantry each company unit of which should be capable of self-sustained, steady fire. Such units while they kept their ranks could not only hold their own against cavalry, but inflict great damage upon them if they came too close. Moreover, brought front to front within sixty or seventy yards of the hostile foot, they could give more hurt than they received. Infantry organized, trained, and deployed for fire could not long be brought in close contact with infantry organized for stability without experiencing a sensible advantage. After half an hour of conflict the other side would look much more ragged than they. This comprehension of the fire-power of infantry was a definite characteristic of Marlborough's tactics. He did not invent or discover it. It had grown unperceived. He saw it and applied it.

The armies of Louis XIV had for two generations held the professional primacy of Europe, but perhaps for that very reason they had been less capable of progress. Turenne long before had sought to develop infantry fire. In spite of the inferior firearms of his day, he tried to make some use of infantry in action other than merely to stand in solid blocks in particular positions. He even experimented with individual skirmishers, and certainly he wished to claim for infantry a higher position upon the battlefields of the seventeenth century. But Turenne's training only covered the troops under his immediate eye, and in the rest of the French Army in the third quarter of the seventeenth century every regiment did what its colonel thought best. Louvois as War Minister imposed uniformity from on high; the whole Army should practise the same drill. He enforced this with the authority of the barrack-square. Fortunately

from our point of view, the valuable element of uniformity was not combined with the true choice.

Thus when the world war began again French commanders had a distinctly lower view of the capacities of infantry than Marlborough or those who served under him. They adopted the flintlock tardily. Even as late as the beginning of William's campaigns the French orders were to break up flintlocks captured in the field. Not until 1700 was the flintlock definitely authorized in France, and its adoption was not complete for some years. It follows from this that the French infantry formations remained five or six ranks deep, while Marlborough favoured a depth of three or four. Their tactical regulations for 1703 still spoke of "le combat à la pique et au mousquet." This phrase reveals how imperfectly the significance of the flintlock, the ring bayonet, and fire tactics were realized in the French Army. They learned in a hard school, but they learned slowly. Once the armies were brought in contact the English and Dutch infantry felt themselves superior to the French, and this accounted for their trust in themselves and for Marlborough's trust in them.

Moreover, the French conceptions arising from these slightly distorted data rated the infantry too low and did not assign them their full scope in the battle. Louis XIV taught his Marshals that infantry attacks were useless and that cavalry was the decisive arm; whereas we always see Marlborough's infantry used with the cavalry and made to play their part with mobile cannon at every stage in the general attack.

Neither in the use of cavalry did the armies of Louis XIV excel. They placed an undue emphasis upon the long horse-pistol, and trained their squadrons to deliver from the halt volleys rank after rank at opposing cavalry, using the sword rather when they came to the mêlée. Certainly one may say that pistol and sword counted equally with the French cavalry. Very different were Marlborough's regulations. With the infantry he relied more on fire and less on steel than the French. With the cavalry he relied entirely upon steel. He did not, indeed, discard the pistol utterly, but he only allowed his cavalry *three pistol-rounds per man for the whole campaign*, the idea being that the pistol was the weapon for individual emergency or foraging duty. The sword and the shock of a mass of horsemen were the factors on which Marlborough counted. His cavalry were trained to manœuvre, to approach the enemy slowly and in close order, and then to ride upon them at a heavy trot in the teeth of their pistol-

fire. This was justified by the fact that, although the musketry-fire of well-trained infantry could break cavalry, the pistol-fire of horsemen was no defence against a resolute charge.

It would be a mistake to assign decisive qualities to the differences in the tactics of the opposing armies which have been set forth here. There was no contrast of black and white, but only of various shades of grey. The hostile troops were often so closely engaged and the war went on so long that the armies learned from one another continually. Yet one can see a certain superiority of method from the very beginning of the new war, which asserted itself on several great occasions and no doubt at many other times which were not noticed.

Nevertheless these were *still* the great days of cavalry, and from a quarter to a third of the men in each army were horse soldiers. A wide expanse of flat or gently undulating country was required for a trial of strength. Marlborough's battles were all fought on fronts of four or five miles, whereas Waterloo filled but three. To find again such large fields we have to come down to the nineteenth century, with its Gettysburg and Gravelotte. The armies of Marlborough's time could usually refuse battle by retiring within "inclosures" or by remaining in rough, scrubby, broken ground. A smooth plain was also necessary for the infantry. It is difficult for a modern officer, with his ideas of individual foot soldiers working and scrambling separately or in small groups across or through any kind of country, and feeling the safer the more it is accidented, to realize what tiny obstacles were serious to the infantry of this period. Most of these historic features would hardly be noticed by a tourist in his walk. But the infantry of Marlborough and Louis XIV depended for their existence in battle upon keeping close and perfect order. Although their fire-power was growing, they must still depend largely upon their strict array and their bayonets, while all around, close at hand, often within hailing distance, moved the flashing squadrons which upon the slightest disorder could crumple them almost instantaneously into bloody and fatal confusion. Thus passing even a small hedge or ditch, which unarmed men could easily jump or perhaps step over, was in the presence of the enemy a most anxious business, and every movement, even of a hundred yards, had to be judiciously foreseen as to the ground and timed as to the enemy.

It would, however, be a mistake to infer that battles under these conditions were slow conflicts of feeble forces. On the contrary,

they were far more sudden and intense than those of the Great War. Instead of struggles lasting for several weeks along fronts of seventy or eighty miles, all was brought into a small compass and a single day. Sometimes two hundred thousand men fought for an afternoon in a space no larger than the London parks put together, and left the ground literally carpeted with a quarter of their number, and in places heaped with maimed or slaughtered men. The destiny of nations flowed with the blood from their brief collision. The spectacle of one of the battlefields of Marlborough, Frederick, or Napoleon was for these reasons incomparably more gruesome than any equal sector of the recent fronts in France or Flanders.

We do not think that the warriors of our own time, unsurpassed in contempt of death or endurance of strain, would have regarded these old battles as a light ordeal. Instead of creeping forward from one crater to another or crouching low in their trenches under the blind hail of death and amid its shocking explosions, Marlborough's men and their brave, well-trained opponents marched up to each other shoulder to shoulder, three, four, or six ranks deep, and then slowly and mechanically fired volley after volley into each other at duelling distance until the weaker wavered andbroke. This was the moment when the falcon cavalry darted in andhacked and slashed the flying men without mercy. Keeping an exact, rigid formation under the utmost trial, filling promptly all the gaps which at every discharge opened in the ranks, repeating at command, platoon by platoon, or rank by rank, the numerous unhurried motions of loading and firing—these were the tests to which our forebears were not unequal. In prolonged severe fighting the survivors of a regiment often stood for hours knee-deep amid the bodies of comrades writhing or for ever still. In their ears rang the hideous chorus of the screams and groans of a pain which no anæsthetic would ever soothe.

Here we must make a digression which may illuminate for the lay reader not one but many operations of war. Accounts of battles and campaigns almost invariably describe the *qualitative* character of the manœuvres without reference to their *quantitative* side. For instance, we read that this battle was won by turning the enemy's flank, and that by breaking his centre; that this army retreated because its line of supply was threatened; or that that advanced boldly, although its communications were cut, and in turn assailed those of its opponent. Where, then, is the secret of victory? It looks at first sight so simple

to say "turn the flank," "pierce the centre," or "cut the communications." But apparently none of these processes work by themselves. All are liable to be countered by other equally obvious and desirable movements. Thus the text-books on war too often merely show certain relations of the fronts and flanks of armies which have been as often favourable to one side as to the other. In truth, all these relations, though suggestive to a student, are meaningless apart from their *quantitative* data. Circumstances alone decide whether a correct conventional manœuvre is right or wrong. The circumstances include all the factors which are at work at the time; the numbers and quality of the troops and their morale, their weapons, their confidence in their leaders, the character of the country, the condition of the roads, time, and the weather: and behind these the politics of their states, the special interests which each army has to guard, together with many other complications. And it is the true comprehension at any given moment of the dynamic sum of all these constantly shifting forces that constitutes military genius.

The problem can seldom be calculated on paper alone, and never copied from examples of the past. Its highest solution must be evolved from the eye and brain and soul of a single man, which from hour to hour are making subconsciously all the unweighable adjustments, no doubt with many errors, but with an ultimate practical accuracy. Thus while nothing is more easy than to assign reasons for success or failure by describing the movements, it is between more or less equal opponents impossible to reveal the real secret of either. That is why the campaigns of the greatest commanders often seem so simple that one wonders why the other fellow did not do as well. That is why critics can write so cogently, and yet successful performers are so rare. Almost any intelligent scribe can draw up a lucid and logical treatise full of laboriously ascertained facts and technical phrases on a particular war situation. But the great captains of history, as has been said, seem to move their armies about "as easily as they ride their horses from place to place." Nothing but genius, the dæmon in man, can answer the riddles of war, and genius, though it may be armed, cannot be acquired, either by reading or experience. In default of genius nations have to make war as best they can, and since that quality is much rarer than the largest and purest diamonds, most wars are mainly tales of muddle. But when from time to time it flashes upon the scene, order and design with a sense almost of infallibility draw out from hazard and confusion. "The mere aspirant after a type of

character only shows his hopeless inferiority when the natural orator or fighter or lover comes along."[1]

The task of the commander in Marlborough's wars was direct. There were no higher formations like divisions and corps. Even the brigade was an improvisation adopted for the campaign. The armies were often divided into wings. There were for each wing generals of cavalry and infantry. Each, like the Chief, was assisted by lieutenant-generals. These high executive officers were available either to carry out particular tasks assigned to them often in the heat of action, or to see that the main plan, with which they were made acquainted, was carried out. The control of the battle was maintained on each side by eight or ten superior officers who had no permanent commands of their own, and were virtually the general staff officers of modern times, working in a faithful subordination. It was with and through these that the commander-in-chief acted, and it is astonishing how smoothly and effectually the troops were often handled and great changes of plan and formation effected even in the stress of action.

In the midst of the scene of carnage, with its drifting smoke-clouds, scurrying fugitives, and brightly coloured lines, squares, and oblongs of men, he sat his horse, often in the hottest fire, holding in his mind the position and fortunes of every unit in his army from minute to minute and giving his orders aloud. We must picture him in those days when the Signal Corps was non-existent, attended not only by three or four generals of high rank, but by at least twenty young officers specially trained and specially mounted, men who were capable of following the event with intelligent eyes, who watched the field incessantly, and who knew where to find the subordinate commanders, their brigades and regiments. For short distances or less important orders the runners we see in the tapestries with their long brass-headed staves of authority were used. Thus in the space of four or five hours perhaps thirty or forty thousand men were killed or wounded on the two sides, and another fearful but glorious name was inscribed in the annals of war.

All this was quite different from the trials of our latter-day generals. We will not belittle them, but they were the trials of mind and spirit working in calm surroundings, often beyond even the sound of the cannonade. There are no physical disturbances: there is no danger: there is no hurry. The generalissimo of an army of

[1] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

two million men, already for ten days in desperate battle, has little or nothing to do except to keep himself fit and cool. His life is not different, except in its glory, from that of a painstaking, punctual public official, and far less agitating than that of a Cabinet Minister who must face an angry Chamber on the one hand or an offended party upon the other. There is no need for the modern commander to wear boots and breeches: he will never ride a horse except for the purposes of health. In the height of his largest battles, when twenty thousand men are falling every day, time will hang heavy on his hands. The heads of a dozen departments will from hour to hour discreetly lay significant sheets of paper on his desk. At intervals his staff will move the flags upon his map, or perhaps one evening the Chief of Staff himself will draw a blue line or a brown line or make a strong arrow upon it. His hardest trials are reduced to great simplicity. "Advance," "Hold," or "Retreat." "There are but ten divisions left in reserve: shall we give three to-day to the beseeching, clamouring battle-zone, or keep them back till to-morrow or the day after? Shall we send them in trains to the north or to the south?" His personal encounters are limited to an unpleasant conversation with an army commander who must be dismissed, an awkward explanation to a harassed Cabinet, or an interview with a representative of the neutral Press. Time is measured at least by days and often by weeks. There is nearly always leisure for a conference even in the gravest crises. It is not true that the old battle has merely been raised to a gigantic scale. In the process of enlargement the sublime function of military genius—perhaps happily—has been destroyed for ever.

But in the times of which we tell the great commander proved in the day of battle that he possessed a combination of mental, moral, and physical qualities adapted to action which were so lifted above the common run as to seem almost godlike. His appearance, his serenity, his piercing eye, his gestures, the tones of his voice—nay, the beat of his heart—diffused a harmony upon all around him. Every word he spoke was decisive. Victory often depended upon whether he rode half a mile this way or that. At any moment a cannon-shot or a cavalry inrush might lay him with thousands of his soldiers a mangled bundle on the sod. That age has vanished for ever. Other trials are reserved for the human spirit. New and vaguer problems overtop such minds as are available. But let us not pretend that modern achievements can be compared, except by million-tongued propaganda, with the personal feats which the very few great captains of the world performed.

Chapter Six

THE HEATHS OF PEER

1702—SUMMER

QUEEN ANNE'S Cabinet under Marlborough's impulsion formed immediately resolute war plans by land and sea for the opening campaign. Marlborough would go to the Low Countries—it was hoped in command of the armies of the Sea Powers, or at least of all the troops in English pay—and would strive by every means to obtain a major decision in the field. Sir George Rooke and the Duke of Ormonde would conduct a large naval and military expedition to capture Cadiz. From this base it would be possible, certainly in the following year, to take Minorca and thus dominate the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, in 1702, after the capture of Cadiz, the fleet was to cruise along the Riviera coasts for as long as possible in the summer months and bring brief but possibly important aid to Prince Eugene. That Marlborough had resolved on this plan of naval action from the moment that he took power and while the Cabinet was still only partially formed is proved by the following letter.

Marlborough to Godolphin

THE HAGUE
April 4

I do not doubt they [the Dutch] will come into the project of Cadiz; and when we are masters of it, I believe they will be of opinion that part of the fleet may go with six or seven thousand men as high as Naples, but not stay above three weeks. *The time this squadron is in the Straits, the rest of the men must be employed in fortifying Cadiz.*

A further thought here is that before the fleet shall return home they should seize upon Corunna, and leave a garrison there if the place be tenable. In order to know that it is, the Queen would send a good engineer by the packet-boat to Corunna.

What I now write arises from a conversation I had with the Secretary of the Admiralty last Sunday, before I had your directions.[1]

To both these bold designs violent opposition arose from all concerned. We shall see presently the impediments to the campaign

[1] Alfred Morrison Papers, *H.M.C.*, Report IX, Part II, 464.

on land, but the obstruction of some of the high authorities in the Cabinet and of Sir George Rooke to the naval expedition was vehement. In 1701 under King William, who had a deep comprehension of Mediterranean naval strategy and its relation to the general war, he had written, "I must repeat my opinion that no service can balance the hazard of bringing our great ships home in the winter" (*i.e.*, keeping them out so late that they would have to cross the Bay and enter the mouth of the English Channel in the winter). He now incited the merchants to cry out that the Channel would be at the mercy of the French. He persuaded Sir Cloudesley Shovell, who was to be in charge of the Channel, to complain that his force was inadequate. All this resistance and the arguments which sustained it were beaten down by the leading men in the Cabinet, and the main Anglo-Dutch fleet in overwhelming superiority to the enemy sailed for the coast of Spain and the attack on Cadiz at the end of July. They carried besides marines eight thousand soldiers under the Duke of Ormonde, and were thus capable of seizing this all-important harbour by an amphibious descent.

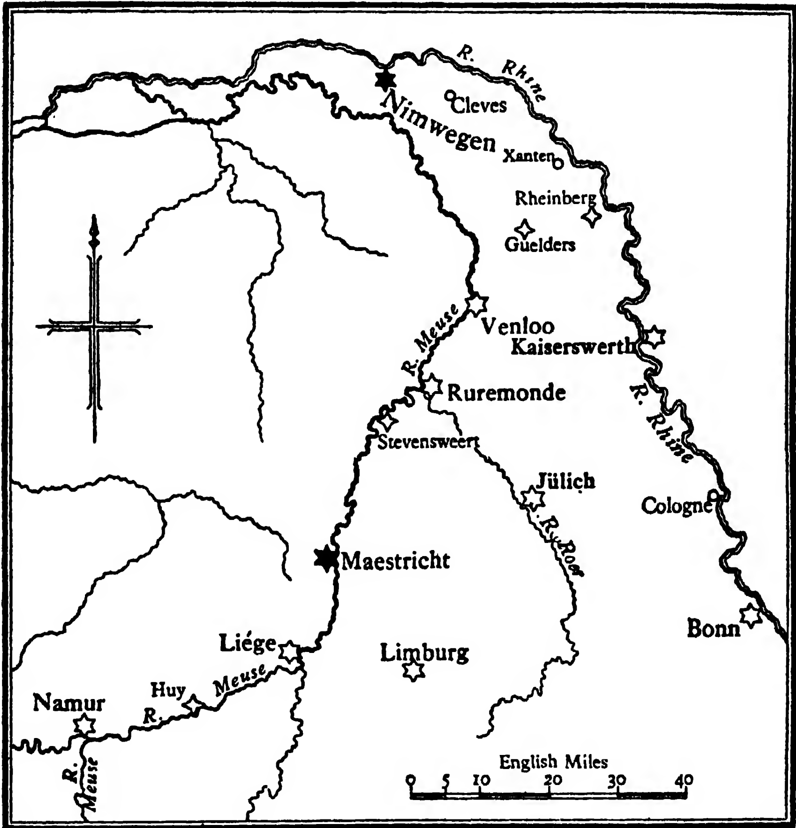
For the year 1702 Louis had decided to set his strongest army against Holland. He knew the divisions and uncertainty into which the Republic had been thrown by the death of King William. He believed that the links which joined it to England had been atthe least gravely weakened. He counted upon a period of hesitation and loss of contact which, if turned to good account by military action, might break the Dutch and scare off the English. The prejudices of the Tories against heavy war on the Continent and their sympathy with Jacobite sentiment were well known at Versailles, and indeed throughout Europe. Their preponderance in Queen Anne's Administration was widely accepted as opening a period of English detachment from the main struggle. It was quite natural for friend and foe to reckon without Marlborough. The Courts and chancelleries knew Sarah, and had made a study of her relations with the new Queen. They regarded Marlborough as a favoured Court personage, able no doubt, and busy with intrigue, but owing his influence entirely to the Queen's affection for his wife. True, he had also been in the previous year King William's man, but it was well known that William managed all great business very closely himself. How could foreigners measure the real relations of the Cockpit group? How could they know what Marlborough was or foresee what he would become?

According to the treaties of the Grand Alliance, the Emperor should have ranged ninety thousand troops out of his quota of a hundred and twenty thousand in the field against the French. Actually he was unable by midsummer to place more than forty thousand in Italy under the command of Prince Eugene, and could only muster twenty thousand upon the Rhine under the Margrave Prince Louis of Baden. The Imperial forces had been weakened by an insurrection which had broken out in Hungary, and also by the unfriendly and already almost menacing attitude of the Elector of Bavaria. We shall deal hereafter with both these vexatious developments.

The evident failure of the Empire to make any serious concentration upon the Upper Rhine led the French to leave that theatre in suspense while they used their principal armies against Eugene in Italy, and against the formidable Anglo-Dutch forces which were now on a war footing in the Netherlands. Two Marshals of France, Villeroy and Vendôme, with sixty thousand men, were assigned to the Italian theatre. Marshal Boufflers, with sixty thousand men, comprising the first army of France, confronted the Sea Powers in the Low Countries. Marshal Catinat, with twenty thousand men, watched the Margrave about the confluence of the Neckar with the Rhine, and guarded Alsace. By the beginning of June both sides had placed about two hundred thousand men upon the fighting fronts, with large and growing establishments in the rear.

In all prudence the French should first have blotted out the Maestricht enclave as well as the neighbouring small patch of Dutch territory around Jülich. Maestricht cut the navigation of the Meuse, and spoiled the main line for the supply of armies invading Holland. But it was possible by convoys from the province of Brabant and from Cologne, and by forming large magazines in Venloo and Ruremonde, to carry the tide of war to the north, leaving Maestricht isolated behind it, to be submerged later on. And of course, if their forward plans had succeeded and the Dutch armies had been beaten and the homelands of Holland invaded, the life of Maestricht was severely limited. Therefore the Great King and the French High Command did not hesitate to place their main army, as soon as the campaigning season began, within twenty miles of Nimwegen in the narrowing tongue-tip of Cleves, which divides the valleys of the Meuse and the Rhine. This was a plan which would answer best, if everything went well. Marshal Boufflers, having Tallard, the former Ambassador in London, as his lieutenant, lay therefore at

Xanten with the French northern army. He was based on two long stretches of the Rhine and the Meuse, along which he held all the fortresses, except only Maestricht. From this position Boufflers began to negotiate with the Elector-King of Brandenburg-Prussia,



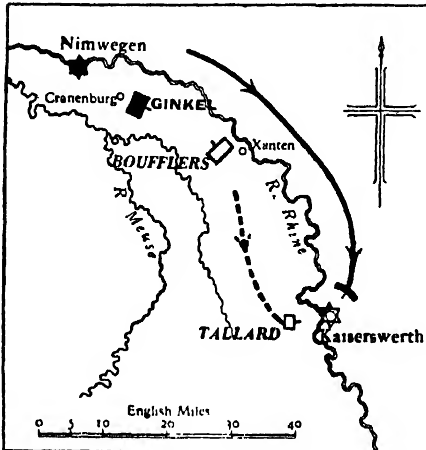
FORTRESSES OF THE MEUSE AND RHINE, EARLY IN 1702[1]

offering him the whole territory of Cologne and Liége if he would abandon the allies and lay Holland open to invasion. The Elector, newly recognized as King 'in' Prussia by the Emperor and, at Marlborough's insistence, by Queen Anne, played with the envoys, gathered his troops, but also kept the Dutch on tenterhooks.

The Dutch, with Marlborough's approval, but before the question

[1] All places not shown in the small plans will be found in the general map, facing p. 990.

of command had been settled, had begun the campaign of 1702 by laying siege in the middle of April to the fortress of Kaiserswerth, a place "mean but well fortified."[1] Rheinberg, some fifteen miles to the north of it, was out of cannon-shot of the river and no effective barrier upon navigation. The fall of Kaiserswerth, therefore, would open the Rhine at least as far as Cologne. Moreover, this movement would be encouraging to the German allies and the Empire, with whom it would put the Dutch in closer relation. The French were watched by the Earl of Athlone, better known to us as Ginkel, with a weaker allied force at Cranenburg, while the allied besieging force made its way to Kaiserswerth, keeping the broad Rhine between them and the French.



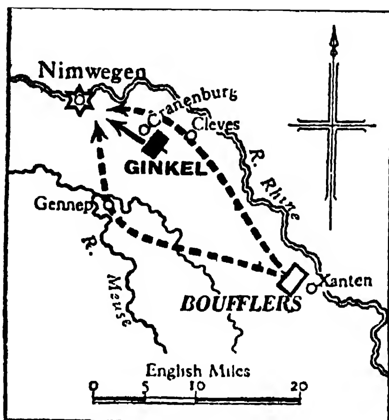
THE SIEGE OF KAISERSWERTH

As soon as the investment of Kaiserswerth began Boufflers detached Tallard with thirteen thousand men to hamper the siege, even if he could not relieve the place. Tallard did not feel able to cross the river in the face of the allies, nor was it thought wise to make this direct assault upon the German Reich. Although he cannonaded and harassed their camps, Tallard was not able to prevent the regular progress of the siege. Early in May the Duke of Burgundy had arrived at Xanten to 'learn the art of war' under Boufflers, and assumed nominal command of the French army. The presence of a Prince of the Blood was held to require special exertions from all. Boufflers therefore on June 10, while Kaiserswerth was still holding out, suddenly and swiftly advanced in two columns through Cleves and Gennep to cop[2] Ginkel. The experienced Dutch soldier was nearly caught. His own information was late and faulty. At the last moment he was saved by a warning message from the Prussian King and by an instant precipitate retreat through the

[1] T. Brodrick, *A Compleat History of the Late War* (1713), p. 11.

[2] We plead that this admirable word, used as early as 1704, should take its place in the English language without any further reproach of slang.

night. At dawn the French cavalry pincers almost closed upon him; but by barely a single mile and half an hour he escaped, and his breathless troops, for whom an English brigade was the rear-guard, turned to bay beneath the fortress guns of Nimwegen.[1] Even these might not have been available for their protection. The governor of the town was suspected of being suborned by the French, and it was the burghers alone who armed and manned the batteries after breaking into the arsenal in which the pieces and their ammunition lay. Berwick thought that if a battle had been fought on the glacis of Nimwegen the French might have entered the town pell-mell with the routed Dutch. But the cannon which the burghers had dragged to the ramparts during the night and morning now began to fire in large numbers and with effect upon the pursuers. Boufflers hesitated and, narrowly baulked, eventually drew off and posted himself near Gennep. This episode deeply alarmed the Dutch in their disturbed political condition. Indeed, they might well have abandoned the siege of Kaiserswerth if that place had not fortunately capitulated on June 15.



THE CRANENBURG PINCERS

Marlborough had reached the Dutch capital on May 26 to find every one in distress and everything in dispute. The supreme command was still unsettled. In June the Prussian King arrived to press somewhat half-heartedly his claim. There is little doubt that Heinsius and his colleagues meant by now to have Marlborough; but the actual announcement was embarrassing. In these circumstances they requested him to remain at The Hague as long as Frederick I was there.[2] Ginkel's narrow escape and the growing public danger forced the decision. Nimwegen, the key of the Rhine delta and the gateway into Holland, had obviously been in dire peril for some hours. This was no time for compliments to

[1] See Lord Cutts' account (Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 40) and Cardonnel's comments and corrections in Add. MSS., 28918, ff. 13–18.

[2] Cardonnel to Aglionby, June 21; S.P., 84/225.

royalty. The foreign princely candidates, including the Prussian King, had all been ruled out by Queen Anne's opposition. The Dutch, with the French bayonets glistening at their very throats, were sure that Queen Anne's husband would not do. Indeed, since May they had made it clear that for their part they would never consent. Still they hesitated, and the tension on the front grew. On June 30 Marlborough, judging the moment opportune, announced that he must leave for Nimwegen, presumably to command the British troops and those in English pay.[1] This apparently clinched the matter; for when he started for the front the next day he was in possession of a patent which conferred on him the title of Deputy Captain-General of the Republic. Cardonnel wrote to say, "The States have given directions to all their Generals and other officers to obey my Lord Marlborough as their General."[2] On July 3 there is a letter of Marlborough's from Nimwegen thanking the Dutch for their decision.[3] Thus we may say that from the beginning of July 1702 Marlborough assumed command of all the Dutch, British, and hired German forces and became the principal general of the Grand Alliance. This post, with its authority varying according to events and the different signatory Powers, he held continuously till the end of 1711. It was never in his power to give orders which covered the whole field of the war, and in many quarters and conjunctures his command was disputed, divided, or merely nominal. But for these ten years he was by loyal assent or tacit recognition the leading general of all the armies of Europe leagued against France. His own discretion and frequent submissions, combined with the shattering military events which he produced, preserved to him, if often only in a ghostlike form, a vague but majestic primacy. He could at no time have asserted a claim to be Generalissimo without widespread repudiation; but there was never an allied demand for anyone else.

The Dutch, when at last they gave Marlborough the command of their armies and to enforce their authority paid him a salary of ten thousand pounds a year, had very definite intentions about the kind of warfare he should wage. They thought he was the best man for the command, and, indeed, the only one who could hold it. But their confidence did not go so far as letting him fight a battle. By the Constitution of the Republic two members of the Government were bound to accompany their Captain-General throughout

[1] Stanhope to Hedges, June 30; S.P. 84/224, f. 68.

[2] *Dispatches*, i, 4. [3] Letter to Fagel, *ibid.*, p. 5.

his operations, and no important action could be fought or town besieged without their assent. They had even sent their deputies to King William's headquarters. They now provided Marlborough with mentors and censors in the Baron Heyden and Mynheer Geldermalsen. All the Dutch generals looked to the two Dutch Deputies, and Marlborough had to fight his first campaign as well as he could within the limits which they prescribed. We shall relate how this system hampered and frustrated Marlborough's plans. But it must not be supposed that this arose from the personal timidity of the Deputies. They had definite instructions from the Dutch Government that no battle was to be risked that could possibly be avoided, and that prudence and moderation should rule both strategy and tactics. Marlborough's endeavour was to persuade them to depart from their instructions, and how he tempted and inspired them will presently be seen. Geldermalsen, a Zeelander and a former Ambassador to England, soon succumbed to Marlborough's arts, and stood up vigorously for the rights of the English general, even against his own fellow-countrymen.

When the news of Marlborough's appointment as Commander-in-Chief reached the camps, indignation rose high among the Dutch generals at their supersession. Ginkel had to the last contended for the command upon alternate days. Opdam, Overkirk, and Slangenberg deemed their military records and experience superior to those of this foreigner. He had, they argued, never grounded himself in the theory of war by professional study. Court favour, diplomatic influence, political intrigue, a chain of accidents, the mutually destructive claims of better men, had given him the coveted distinction. There was truth in much of this; but there was other truth besides.

Upon his arrival at Nimwegen Marlborough at first remained in considerable seclusion. He sat through the councils of war silent and observant. He took his great position sedately. To Godolphin, who wrote his congratulations, he replied, "The station I am now in . . . would have been a great deal more agreeable to me if it could have been had without dispute and a little less trouble; but patience will overcome all things." He treated Ginkel and the other Dutch generals with equal respect and reserve. He seems to have spoken more intimately to the captains of the foreign mercenary contingents. These soon gained the impression that the new Commander-in-Chief did not approve of the cautious methods of making war which reigned in the allied camp. He seemed dissatisfied with the idea of

passively protecting the frontier, and possibly capturing some Belgian fortress in the course of the campaign. He was reported to hold strange doctrines about war. England was not attracted by small warfare or limited objects. It was not this town nor that which she sought. The annihilation of the French army in a great battle and the humbling of Louis XIV in the open field were the purposes which had brought the English troops to the Netherlands. He would not agree to be responsible to the Queen if the allied army tethered itself at the gates of Nimwegen, and allowed the enemy to live at its side on friendly soil between the Meuse and the Rhine. He had not been a week at headquarters before it was known that he was demanding drastic decisions from the Dutch Government.

Marlborough to Godolphin

DUCKENBERG
July 13, 1702

I am ashamed to write from this camp, for we ought to have marched from hence three or four days ago; but the fears the Dutch have for Nimwegen and the Rhine created such difficulties when we were to take a resolution that we were forced to send to The Hague, and the States would not come to any resolution, but have made it more difficult, by leaving it to the general officers, at the same time recommending, in the first place, the safety of the Rhine and Nimwegen. . . . If the fear of Nimwegen and the Rhine had not hindered us from marching into Brabant, they [the enemy] must then have had the disadvantage of governing themselves by our motions, whereas we are now obliged to mind them.[1]

His attitude caused excitement in the camp and perturbation at The Hague. Heinsius felt so insecure in his authority, and all parties in Holland were in such lively alarm, that it was only with extreme difficulty that they could be persuaded to entertain any offensive operation. They clung to the strong army which now stood between them and the enemy, and sought to prevent any movement which would uncover Nimwegen. They could not bear to "lose sight of the Army." But Geldermalsen supported Marlborough. He wrote to Heinsius on July 9:

I must beg you in the name of God to be so good as to work unceasingly for a resolve to do something effective; for without action all is lost. . . . Mylord Marlborough cannot but be in lively distress to see himself at the head of the stronger army tied to the gates of a town or subsisting with the enemy upon allied soil. It will be difficult

[1] Coxe, i, 171.

to justify such manœuvres to England, and there they will accuse the weakness of our Government.[1]

The discussions were protracted both in the capital and in the camp. Meanwhile Marlborough was drawing in reinforcements from every quarter, and by July 6 had concentrated in front of Nimwegen at Duckenberg an army which, though somewhat smaller than the French, gave him the assurance that he was master. He held a grand review, and sixty thousand well-trained soldiers, equipped and furnished in every way and led by experienced or veteran officers, paraded before him. On the 15th he marched with his whole force directly towards the enemy and camped upon the Meuse about Grave. Here only seven miles separated the two armies. He found time to write to Sarah.

John to Sarah

July 17, 1702

We have now very hot weather, which I hope will ripen the fruit at St Albans. When you are there, pray think how happy I should be walking alone with you. No ambition can make me amends for being from you. If it were not impertinent, I should desire you in every letter to give my humble duty to the Queen, for I do serve her with all my heart and soul. I am on horseback or answering letters all day long; for besides the business of the army, I have letters from The Hague, and all places where her Majesty has any Ministers. So that if it were not for my zeal for her service, I should certainly desert, for you know of all things I do not love writing.[2]

The ostensible object of the advance had been the siege of Rheinberg, but Marlborough intended, once the army was in motion, to substitute a larger design. The challenging movement of the army and its magnificent appearance freed the troops from the sense of weakness and irresolution by which they had been oppressed while they huddled around Nimwegen. His perfect self-confidence, although he was for the first time at the head of a great army, spread itself throughout the ranks. But the Dutch generals were stubborn, and their Government quaked. It took Marlborough a fortnight to persuade them to the next move. It may be that if he had had a free hand he would have marched directly into Brabant and towards Antwerp. But he knew the States-General would never allow their provinces to be, as they would have declared, exposed. There was, however, another plan which offered remarkable

[1] Von Noorden, i, 260.
[2] Coxe, i, 172.

advantages. Marlborough saw the rickety foundations beneath the bold, aggressive position which Boufflers had assumed.

Sixty miles behind the menacing French front lay Maestricht, strong and unsubdued, with its ample supplies, beckoning its friends from the north. The advance of a strong army towards Maestricht would immediately bring Boufflers hurrying back to Brabant and to a safer line of communications. He would have to abandon the Meuse and its three French fortresses of Venloo, Stevensweert, and Ruremonde, or—fight and win a battle. Without alarming the Dutch by dwelling unduly on this second possibility, Marlborough pressed for permission to march south from Nimwegen. Even for this limited movement he had a wearying struggle. He had to persuade not only generals who, like Ginkel, resented his command, but a crowd of anxious Dutch functionaries and magnates. He took a number of these upon a reconnaissance towards Boufflers' camp, and, pointing to the long lines of French tents, remarked, "I shall soon rid you of these troublesome neighbours."

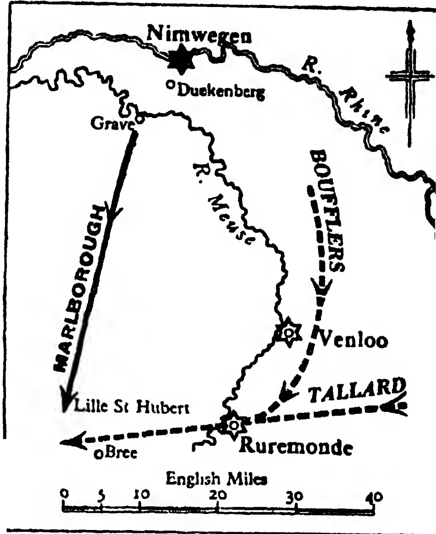
As the Rheinberg project faded from the lateness of the siege material, and as delay threatened to sink into futility, Marlborough made an offer to the States which, while it allayed their fears, increased his and their dangers. He offered to divide the army. Geldermalsen was speeding to and fro between headquarters and The Hague. "Should we follow what he thinks to be best," wrote Marlborough to Godolphin on July 20,

> I think the French may have it in their power to beat us. But to comply as far as I can, I have this night proposed to them the leaving twenty squadrons of horse, and eighteen battalions of foot, to entrench themselves before Nimwegen, and to pass the Meuse with the rest of the army, or to march with the whole towards Cleves, in order to get between Venloo and the French, if possible, so as to be able to attack them.[1]

At length after the loss of ten precious days his patience and the sense of confidence he inspired around him prevailed. The Dutch still disbelieved that the march he proposed would have the result of forcing Boufflers to retire, but they consented to the experiment. At the last minute a disappointment occurred. The Prussian and Hanoverian contingents had arrived with orders that they were not on any account to cross the Meuse. "In that case," said Marlborough, "they need not have come at all." When this remonstrance, combined with the recent recognition which Marlborough

[1] Coxe, i, 173.

had procured from Queen Anne of the Great Elector as King in Prussia, reached Berlin it was effective. At last on July 26 Marlborough, having thrown his three bridges under pretence of seeking forage, crossed to the left bank of the Meuse with about fifty thousand men, including the English. That night and on the following days he marched steadily southward. On the 31st he captured a small frontier garrison and three hundred men in the castle of Gravensbrück, and reached Lille Saint-Hubert the same night. Here he halted, having covered forty miles. What would the enemy do?



MARLBOROUGH STRIKES SOUTH

They did what Marlborough had promised. The results were immediate. He obliged the enemy, in Captain Parker's homely words, "to quit their camp and dance after him."[1] He gained the initiative. From the very first moment that Boufflers saw his movement he broke up his camp near Cleves, marched with all speed back to Ruremonde, and summoned Tallard's detachments to join the main army. On the 28th he was at Ruremonde, waiting anxiously for Tallard to draw closer. The danger of his position on the Meuse, with hostile Maestricht behind him, was apparent the moment it was tested. He must form contact again with his true base in Brābant. But to do this he had to march round Marlborough's front. Says Parker, "We were just between them and home and they had no way homeward but by marching over a heath which was within half a league of our camp."[2]

On the 30th Boufflers, seeing no other chance open, turned westward and began his perilous march. The reader will see from the diagram that the two armies were now approaching each other almost at right angles and that a serious battle might be fought. Boufflers was at a grave disadvantage, because he had, in slipping

[1] Parker, *Memoirs*, p. 79. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

past, to expose during the whole day his right flank to Marlborough's downward spear-thrust. He had to make a flank march across the front of an army which he must presume would attack him in the midst of that awkward manœuvre. He could not know what troops, if any, Marlborough had been obliged to leave behind to soothe the Dutch. There might well be seventy thousand men on top of Boufflers when he was most ill-arranged to receive them. Moreover Maestricht, that hostile fortress with its large garrison, was already obtruding itself upon his movements. The gap between Marlborough's army and Maestricht was now only twenty miles. Boufflers decided to run the risk. Meanwhile Marlborough was joined by the English artillery, escorted by two battalions and comprising thirty-four cannon and four "Hawbitzers," or half the artillery of the army.

We can see from the letter which he wrote to Godolphin upon the morning of the 30th how crucially the relations of the two armies were defined.

Marlborough to Godolphin

CAMP NEAR HAMONT
July 30, 1702

. . . I might have less time [to write] to-morrow since our march will in all likelihood that day be governed by the motion of the French army. For if they march from Weert, where we take their camp now to be, we shall endeavour to make their march uneasy [*i.e.*, attack them]. If they stay in their camp, which it is generally believed they will not, we shall then post ourselves between them and the Demer. Our marches have already had the effect desired, which was their repassing the Meuse, which had we done sooner had been much better. But the very extravagant fears all Holland had for Nimwegen and the passage of the Rhine had like to have spoiled all the campaign. I hope now we shall oblige them to quit the Meuse by which we shall be able to besiege Venloo, and make the [our] army for the rest of the campaign subsist in their country. *If they would venture anything this summer, it ought to be this day: for our march is upon an open heath and we are weaker by sixteen regiments of foot than we shall be three days hence.* I am just getting on horseback to begin the march, and my letter is dated from the place where we are to camp to-night. The French are nearer to it than we are, but I do not think they will venture [*i.e.*, fight]. But by this march they must own that we do not avoid meeting them. In my next I shall be able to tell you what party [*i.e.*, *parti* = decision] they have taken; for they must resolve either to quit the Meuse or abandon Brabant.[1]

[1] Partly in Coxe (wrongly transcribed), i, 175.

There is an air of suppressed excitement about this matter-of-fact letter, and one feels that the writer, about to mount his horse and hoping in a few hours to command in his first great battle, wished to leave some record of his mood and situation. It was an impulse to which he rarely yielded. We have only one or two instances when he seems to look at himself and his background in a mirror. We may measure the tenseness of the business from this fact. Actually the climax was delayed.

Marlborough had from the beginning intended to bring matters to a point where both the French, in spite of their disadvantage, and the Dutch, in spite of their misgivings, would be compelled to fight. Once on the move and in contact with the enemy he began to assert his authority. "From day to day," said Geldermalsen, "he makes it the more felt that he is Commander here; whereas at Nimwegen he sought to do nothing that was not decided by the generals."[1] He hoped that once the Dutch were presented with a rare war-chance of taking the enemy at marked disadvantage he would be able to swing them into the battle. But he reckoned vainly. On the night of August 1, at Little Bruegel, he saw that the moment had come. He exposed to the Dutch Deputies his intention to attack Boufflers with his whole army the next day. We do not know how long he wrestled with them: in the end they agreed. All the baggage was sent back, and the allied army was set in battle array. Dawn broke, and Marlborough was on horseback, meaning to order a general attack upon the French, the heads of whose columns were to be seen approaching from the southward, about to cross his front. But then ensued a painful scene. The Deputies had given their consent: the decisive commands were about to be issued: and now they withdrew it. They were conscious of their weak position. They did not dictate—they besought him not to put the army of the Republic upon the cast of the die. He might have been right about the strategy, but no one could tell whether he would be victorious in a battle. There was the risk of defeat and the certainty of heavy loss. Besides, they had now heard what he had known the day before, that Tallard was close behind Boufflers and that the enemy's army was thus superior in numbers. They implored him to let them off their over-night resolve.

Anyone acquainted with war will realize that this was a very hard trial for a general. But the armies of a coalition cannot be handled like those of a single state. Swallowing his feelings, the Commander-

[1] To Heinsius, August 1, 1702; von Noorden, i, 261.

in-Chief bowed to their appeals. There should be no battle: but he exacted a condition. They must, he said, ride out with him to see what might have happened. They did so, and beheld during the whole of the morning of the 2nd the French army, in imposing numbers but considerable disorder, streaming across their front with their whole flank exposed. As this spectacle told its own tale, the Deputies admitted that a grand opportunity had been lost. But another immediately recurred. After their long march the French were forced to camp on the night of August 2 at Zonhoven, still in a most dangerous position. Marlborough, hopeful that his demonstration in the morning would win him freedom to give the necessary orders, again urged an attack the next day. Again the Deputies could not bring themselves to do such violence to their instructions.

Upon the opportunity we have confirmation from the other side. Berwick, with his military instinct, measured the position as well as Marlborough.

> The Earl of Marlborough proposed to march up to us, by passing the defile of Peer, by which a battle on the heaths would have been unavoidable; but the Deputies of the States-General would never consent to this, any more than to attack us in our camp at Sonoven. This was very fortunate for us; for we were posted in such a manner that we should have been beaten without being able to stir, our left being very high, and our right sunk into a *cul-de-sac* between two rivulets.[1]

The retreat of Boufflers from the Meuse had enabled Marlborough to draw six thousand men, nine battalions, to his army from the troops extorted from him to cover Nimwegen. When these joined him he was again definitely the stronger. But the veto on battles continued. Thus Boufflers, so recently aggressive and menacing, was able to make his escape into Brabant. He had lost no battle, but he had abandoned the whole Meuse with its fortresses and two out of the three areas which he had been told by Louis XIV it was his duty to guard. Here was the first crux of Marlborough's campaign of 1702.

Amid these trials he found relief in writing to Sarah about all sorts of things, great and small. * "We do not march to-morrow so that I have written to Lord Churchill [his son]. If you do not like it, send me such a letter as you would have me write." Apparently the children were in Sarah's special department, or perhaps this was in answer to his son's request to be allowed to go to the wars. "This

[1] *Memoirs*, i, 170.

afternoon is the only time I have had to myself this seven or eight days, and I have employed it in writing to you and my dear Children for I have no mind to go to bed. . . ." "You say nothing to me," he complained, "how the Election went at St Albans, nor how my garden is, which I have not forgot. . . . I do beg of you not to be uneasy that you have not sent me the accounts, for I had much rather never have them, than that you should do it at a time when it might be troublesome to you." He asked Sarah whether anything could be done for one of his assistants—Courant. "It is not reasonable to expect the Queen should remember her intentions of doing something for [him], instead of letting him be page of the back-stairs; but since he had the honour of being in the poor Duke's family [the late Duke of Gloucester] I desire you would some way know if anything be done for him; for his being with me should not be the occasion of his being the only one not provided for." He deals at length with the time of the meeting of Parliament. It would be "very much for her Majesty's interest in the country if they meet early in October, so that everybody might see that the new Parliament as well as her Majesty are zealous for the Common Cause. . . . Till that be seen the Empire will not do as they ought." He hopes that timely notice will be given to the Members and Peers, so that they will not settle down for the autumn in their country estates. He thinks Ministers are foolish in going to their country houses and hoping for a quiet holiday when Parliament will inevitably be summoned soon. He urges, "If this matter be not resolved quickly and notice given, I am afraid you will find Sunderland, and a great many of his friends, not consider, or not know, the great advantage it would be to the Queen, and the Common Cause, to have them meet early, but [will] consider only their own conveniency of staying in their countries and so be against the meeting." He says that "76" (? Harley) will be disappointed if he imagines that he can go to his country house and yet be back in time for the meeting of Parliament.

In all these desultory fragments two sentences break in at different points which show us what was really in his mind. "*These last three or four days have been very uneasy, I having been obliged to take more pains than I am well able to endure.*" And, later, "*Pray give my humble duty to the Queen. I was in hopes the day before yesterday I might have done her some service.*"[1]

[1] This letter is dated August 3. It was plainly not finished for some days. The underlining is Marlborough's.

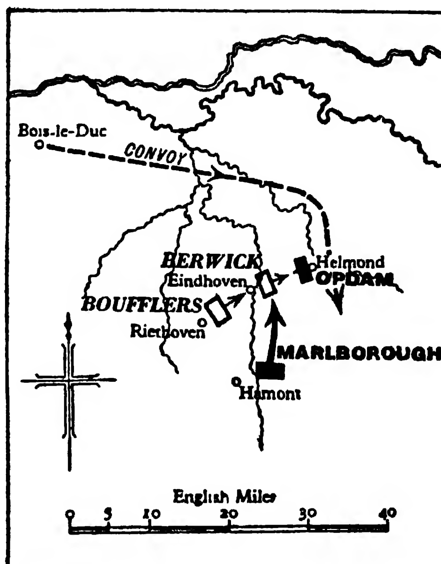
The second disappointment arose in the following manner. Louis was shocked at the loss of the Meuse and the occupation by his enemies of the large territories of Spanish Guelderland and the Bishopric of Liége. He had not been accustomed to such treatment. He sent insistent instructions to his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, to show greater vigour, and above all to make sure that Venloo and the other now isolated fortresses on the Meuse were not captured. Marlborough, with what the confederates called "the grand army," still lay in the heaths about Peer, and their supply was an intricate business. They could not use the Meuse because of the untaken French fortresses. They had to subsist either upon stores drawn from the immense magazines of Maestricht or by convoys from Nimwegen and Bois-le-Duc, which latter place the English soldiers, anticipating modes which they used in the Great War, quaintly called "Boilduck."

Boufflers, animated by Berwick and spurred by the King, tried to interrupt Marlborough's communications with the north. Accordingly, on August 9 and 10 he marched to Riethoven, sending Berwick forward to Eindhoven. Now this movement was not at all objectionable to Marlborough. On the contrary, he saw in it another opportunity of drawing the French and enticing the Dutch Deputies to where they would have to fight. So he played the second phase of this double game the goal of which was battle.

It happened that an important convoy, probably of seven or eight hundred wagons containing both bread and treasure, was moving under the escort of Lord Albemarle—William's friend, the young Keppel—down from "Boilduck" to the army. Boufflers and Berwick in their new positions were well placed to intercept it. Marlborough, facing about at Hamont, sent the Dutch general Opdam, of whom more (and little good) hereafter, with six thousand men to Helmond to bring in Albemarle and his convoy safely. We can see without doubt that he meant to use both Opdam and the convoy as glittering baits of different sizes and character to provoke a general action. On the morning of August 16 the convoy had nearly joined Opdam, and Berwick was about to fall on both. Boufflers was hurrying forward with his main army; but just as Berwick was about to fall on Opdam—in fact, only a mile separated the forces—Boufflers learned that Marlborough with his whole army was advancing rapidly on his own flank. The Marshal thereupon recalled Berwick, who was indignant at being baulked, and countermarched himself with rapidity out of harm's way. The hook

had been shown too soon. Marlborough withdrew south for another cast, and once again he used Opdam as the bait. He kept Opdam and his tempting detachment just far enough behind him to attract the French.

Boufflers, with his back towards Holland, now followed for three days, Marlborough retreating towards France. Where armies are equal the general who is retiring can always turn and fight, and as he can choose the moment, so he can choose the ground. For three days the French had the exhilaration of apparently driving the enemy before them and away from his home and his communications. On the afternoon of the third day they began to emerge from difficult country on to the Heath of Helchteren, a wide expanse well suited to the action of cavalry, in which arm Marlborough was superior. Here they saw the allied army suddenly drawn up in full array and evidently about to strike. Now even the Dutch Deputies were converted. Any plain man could see the advantage they would have in attacking the French while they were but half-debouched from defiles, scrub, and morasses. They gave their assents, and the Commander-in-Chief, so called, issued his orders. The cannonade opened from both artilleries, and several hundred men were stricken in each of the armies.



THE SECOND THRUST

At five o'clock Opdam on the right, reinforced to ten thousand men, was ordered to begin the battle by attacking the French left, whose difficulties and disarray could be plainly seen. But after the Dutch Deputies the Dutch generals. Opdam, alleging the state of the ground, consumed three vital hours without making any appreciable movement. The advance of the rest of the army depended upon Opdam. Night fell, and under its cover the French were able to complete their deployment.

The next day, the 24th, although the battle would have been much more even, Marlborough still wished to engage. But now it was the Deputies who jibbed. They could see the advantages which might have been seized yesterday, but to-day the issue seemed balanced. Surely it was wiser to wait till to-morrow. If Boufflers attacked he must be encountered; but if he did not attack the matter could be reconsidered on the morrow. "To-morrow," said Marlborough, "Monsieur de Boufflers will be gone." And so he was. "The French lofty army," wrote Sergeant Millner, "immediately withdrew from their attempt and fell backward."[1] A pursuit by the English cavalry yielded only minor advantages. Here was the second crisis of the campaign. Here was the second lost opportunity.

We owe to Ailesbury a glimpse of Marlborough on one of these days which seems to bring him near to us. The Earl had asked to visit Marlborough at the front in order to press for leave to go to England on his private affairs. Marlborough had replied that he had better not, "and you may guess the reason," he said in a letter. He had described himself as "set round with a company of officers that he knew were my enemies." So Ailesbury sent his secretary, one Mr West, with a letter. The secretary found Marlborough under cannon-fire, "standing in the middle of a circle of generals. The bombardment was to celebrate St Louis's day." The secretary, guided by a companion, approached. Marlborough recognized him, and, turning aside from his staff, said, "Mr West, my humble service to my lord. You see I cannot write now, but I will send an express to Aix." He added a warning that the spot was dangerous. Mr West bowed and withdrew with his companion a short distance. There was a long whistle and another horrid sound; Mr West's companion had had his head sheared off. The secretary thereupon considered his mission at an end; "not being used," says Ailesbury, "to such hot work, no doubt he was severely affrighted."[2] The day of St Louis is August 25, and Ailesbury explicitly cites the year as 1702. We may therefore fix this incident during the contact of the armies around Helchteren.

Marlborough repressed his wrath at the obstructions by which he was hampered. It has been said of him that he had so many plans all thought out in his mind, and could change so easily from one to the other, that he suffered less by the frustration of his combinations than would a general whose heart was set on some particular scheme. He always felt that if he was not allowed to win one

[1] Millner, *Journal*, p. 26. [2] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, ii, 535.

way, he could find another. Still, these were torturing experiences. He wrote to Godolphin from Helchteren on August 27:

> I have but too much reason to complain that the ten thousand men upon our right did not march as soon as I sent the orders, which if they had, I believe we should have had a very easy victory, for their whole left was in disorder. However, I have thought it much for her Majesty's service to take no notice of it, as you see by my letter to the States. But my Lord Rivers, and almost all the general officers of the right, were with me when I sent the orders, so that notwithstanding the care I take to hinder it, they do talk. . . .
>
> . . . Venloo will be invested to-morrow . . .
>
> I am in so ill humour that I will not trouble you, nor dare I trust myself to write more; but believe this truth, that I honour and love you, my lady Marlborough, and my children, and would die for the Queen.[1]

One thing, however, was beyond endurance. He could not bear that his kinsman Berwick, whose merit he divined, and Marshal Boufflers should suppose that he had himself thrown away glorious chances and shrunk from carrying his combinations to the point of battle. His professional pride and instinct asserted themselves above all things. We have the strange spectacle of a Commander-in-Chief apologizing to his antagonists for not attacking them upon two occasions when they knew he would have been technically right to put all to the test. He actually sent a trumpet with letters to Boufflers and Berwick to assure them with compliments that the failure in coming to battle was none of his fault. There is no doubt from their movements at many crucial passages in this and the next campaign that they believed him. Whether his candour was wise or not can never be decided. It is certainly curious.

[1] Coxe, i, 180–181.

Chapter Seven

THE FORTRESSES OF THE MEUSE

1702—AUTUMN

MARLBOROUGH was forced to recognize for the time being that even under the most favourable circumstances he would not be allowed to fight a battle. No one can measure the internal stresses of the general who has to conduct war against an equal enemy under such paralysing control All that Frederick the Great and Napoleon have taught us in war shows how far the methods of Marlborough were in advance of his time. For the last forty years Flanders had been the scene of campaigns which, though hard-fought, had no purpose but the capture or relief of one or the other of its many fortresses, no prize that was not geographical. It almost seemed that Governments and their commanders avoided the destruction of their enemy, were content to let the process run on, exercising the generals on both sides in methodical sieges, the correct management of magazines, and other text-book performances, and repaying the over-taxed public with fresh exciting news from the front. Turenne alone, and only occasionally, aimed at the battle as the true solution. The idea of seeking a battle under favourable conditions and shattering the enemy's main force by fighting was the military commonplace of the nineteenth century, and was carried to fearful lengths in the twentieth. But now Marlborough must reconcile himself to the conventional warfare of the end of the seventeenth century. He must content himself with parades, manœuvres, the sieges of fortresses, and the control of foraging areas. This was not his kind of war. But if it was the only one permitted, he would make it serve. The fortresses on the Meuse were within his grasp. But in this project he had already encountered many disappointments.

Marlborough to Godolphin

EVERBEECK
August 21, 1702

*It is now eight days since we made the detachment for Venloo, and last night we received a letter from Monsrs Geldermalsen and

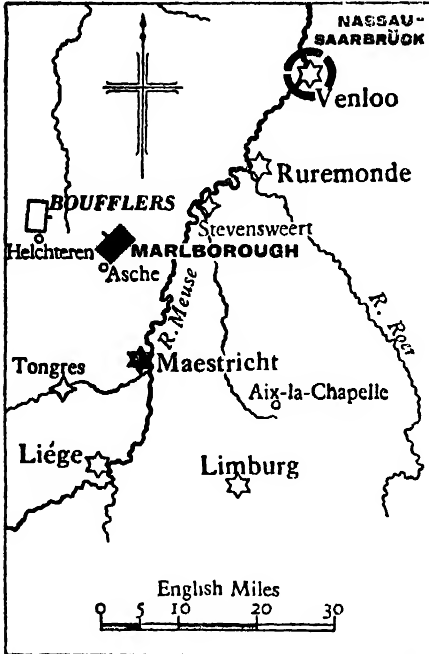
Cohorn from the Grave which says that for want of powder and other necessaries they can't begin the siege till the beginning of the next month. Notwithstanding the great conveniency and desire the States have to have Venloo, yet their Government at this time is so very negligent that I am afraid at last [in the end] they will not be able to attack it by which all the frute of this campaign will be lost. I have written very pressing letters to The Hague and have endeavoured to make them sensible how scandalous it would be if this siege should miscarry for want of necessary preparations. They promised that everything should be ready by the 2nd of this month old style [August 13]. What I say of Venloo and the Dutch you will see is fit only to be known by the Queen and [the] Prince; for a friendship with these people is absolutely necessary for the common cause and her Majesty's service, and I am in hope that the prudence of the Pensioner this winter may order matters so that their parties may unite, and then there can be no doubt but everything will go better.

I received two days ago the enclosed letter from M. Schmettau, the King of Prussia's Plenipotentiary at The Hague, by which you will see how much that King is pleased with her Majesty's having allowed the ceremonial he so much desired. It has already had the good effect that we could not have made the siege without his troops which we could not have had if he had not been pleased with this thing; for upon the assurance of it he gave orders to the Baron Heyden to obey whatever orders I should give him during this campaign, and accordingly he has passed the Rhine with the troops under his command, and has assured me that he shall invest Venloo on that side of the Meuse whatever day I shall direct him. At the same time he has made difficulty of being commanded at the siege by my Lord Athlone [Ginkel], which is the reason of the States sending for the Prince of Saarbrook to command, . . . for with him he can't dispute. . . .

The convoy from Boilduck which we have been so long expecting joined us yesterday so that we shall march to-morrow and continue our march next day towards Diest for till all things are ready for the investing Venloo, we are at liberty of marching where we please, and by this march we shall make their convoys very uneasy, or oblige their army to march out of the mairie of Boilduck.

All authorities were agreed upon the siege of Venloo. The Dutch and the French attached equal importance to it; and Marlborough himself had perforce to describe it as the "frute of this campaign." Venloo was much the strongest of the three fortresses which the French held on the Meuse north of Maestricht. The same strategic events which would decide the fate of Venloo would probably involve Ruremonde and Stevensweert. On August 29 Venloo was

regularly invested by the Prince of Nassau-Saarbrück, reinforced by Opdam to a total of 32 battalions and 36 squadrons. Marlborough, with the rest of his army of about forty-five thousand men, took post at Asche. Here he covered Maestricht and could, if need be, draw supplies from it for a time. Here he was on the flank of any effort by Boufflers to relieve Venloo. Once again the value of Maestricht became evident. Marlborough could afford some risk to his communications with Holland because of the fortress and its exceptional supplies, but Boufflers, moving north past Marlborough's right, would run the gravest risks both of battle and interception. If alternatively he recrossed to the right bank of the Meuse and sought to rescue its fortresses by a turning movement through Limburg and Aix-la-Chapelle, he would expose the whole of Brabant to immediate invasion. One has only to study the map to admire the choice of Asche for all purposes.



MARLBOROUGH COVERS THE SIEGE OF VENLOO

Louis XIV now wrote to Burgundy urging him with royal and family insistence to face the hazards and try to relieve Venloo. Burgundy used all his influence, but a council of war decided obstinately and rightly that, having regard to the position of Marlborough's army, the difficulties of supply were too great; and the generals could only suggest as a consolation and diversion the siege of Hulst, a small Dutch town on the other side of the theatre between Antwerp and Ostend.

Thus a fortnight passed. The siege of Venloo at first went very slowly. Marlborough's secret letters, as we have seen, complain of the Dutch. For weeks preparation had been ordered for this deeply desired event; but after the investment had been made everything was late. The arrival of the heavy batteries and their

munitions, the opening of the trenches by civilian labour, and all the necessary sapping and mining, were many days behind the schedule prepared and counted upon for this operation. Cohorn as the expert engineer, the specialist in sieges, was soon in quarrel with the Dutch generals, each party blaming the other for the delay. Now that so many allied troops were at the siege Marlborough was a good deal weaker than Boufflers. He had to watch him from hour to hour, and be always ready to fight. On September 13 Boufflers moved to Tongres, where he was but ten miles from Liége, and Marlborough, moving south, placed himself between him and Maestricht. Here he was well supplied both from the north and from the district.

Marlborough to Godolphin

ASCHE
Aug. 31, 1702

I thank God we have now the finest weather that can be desired, which makes me very impatient to hear of the cannon being arrived at Venloo, which place was invested last Monday; but they can make no great progress till they have their artillery. England, that is famous for negligence, should any they employ be guilty of half what I see here, it would be impossible for them to avoid being justly torn to pieces by the Parliament.[1]

Marlborough to Godolphin

ASCHE
September 7, 1702

They make so many difficulties at the siege of Venloo, that to-morrow there go from this army five battalions and five squadrons notwithstanding we have notice that the business of Flanders is over, and that their [the enemy's] detachment will join them this day. And it is said that part of the troops with the Marquis of Bedmar have also orders to join the army. I have also intelligence from Venloo, that orders are come there for the baking of bread for the army. If all this be true, I shall be of your mind, that they will attempt something. If so, pray God give us success, and the sooner they attempt the better, their army being much sicker than ours. If they come to us now, we shall have 15 battalions and 28 squadrons less than we had, when we were last in presence with them. However our men are in so good heart, that I daresay we shall beat them.[2]

Marlborough to Godolphin

SUTENDAL
Sept. 14, 1702

★Your going to the Bath has been the reason of my having none

[1] Coxe, i, 182.
[2] *Ibid.*, i, 183.

from you by the last post which came here yesterday. The French army having marched three days, which has brought them to the Camp of Tongres, has obliged us to come to this place, for the securing our bread from Maestricht, as also for the conveniency of having our forage from the Spanish Geldre on the other side of the Meuse. . . . The trenches at Venloo having been opened last Monday, I hope a fortnight more may finish that business, after which the fate of Ruremond will depend upon the goodness of the season, which may make my stay in the field a fortnight longer than otherwise it would be. That I may do all that is in my power for the complying with your desires of my being early in England, I am pressing all that I can that we might from this Army make a detachment of eight battalions and ten squadrons, with which Lt. G. Shults offers to undertake the siege of Stevensweert, which can only be attacked in a dry season as this is. The difficulty is not because the French are so near us, for our camp may be made very strong; but we can't do it but by having the cannon and mortars, and all other things necessary from the garrison of Maestricht, which can't be done but by the States' order. You will see in the map the situation of this place being between Ruremond and Maestricht makes it very necessary that we should have it. It is not to be imagined the backwardness and sloth of these people, even for that which is for their own good.

On September 18 a surprising feat of arms was performed at Venloo. The Royal Regiment of Ireland, later the 18th, with two English battalions, had been ordered as one of the processes in the siege to clear the glacis of Fort St Michael and drive the enemy from the covered way. However, Lord Cutts assembled the officers and told them that he assigned no limit to their attack. If they could get farther, all the better. This unusual order produced astonishing results. The Anglo-Irish brigade rushed forward, and, having chased the enemy from the covered way, followed them over the drawbridge and across the open ditch so closely that "the loose planks were not slipped" and the whole crowd arrived together on the actual ramparts of the fort. By more good luck the governor had omitted to mow the grass, and all the redcoats scrambled up the steep slope by hand and foot, mingled with the flying French, and tumbled pell-mell into the interior of the fort, where after some slaughter the whole garrison of fifteen hundred men surrendered to fewer assailants. Thus was the mad escapade rewarded by astounding success. Our diarists of the Royal Irish were indignant.

Had not several unexpected accidents occurred in the affair, hardly a man of us would have escaped being either killed, drowned, or

> taken, . . . but success . . . crowned the event which got the Lord Cutts great applause of which he boasted all his life after, though neither he nor any of the noblemen stirred one foot out of the trenches till we were masters of it, except the young Earl of Huntingdon, who stole out of the trenches from them and kept up with the foremost.[1]

The loss of Fort St Michael broke the spirit of the defence, and preparations were pressed forward for the final attack. On September 22 the news arrived that the fortress of Landau, far off in Germany, had been taken by Prince Louis of Baden. A joy-fire of musketry and of all the cannon was ordered in celebration of this event. The defenders of Venloo, not knowing the reason of these loud explosions, deemed them the prelude of the assault. They therefore displayed white flags, beat a parley, and forthwith capitulated. Altogether we had much good fortune in the siege of Venloo.[2]

Marlborough to Godolphin

> SUTENDAL
> *September* 28, 1702
>
> The very ill weather gives too reasonable an excuse that the sieges do not go so fast as could be wished. However, I think there is no doubt but we shall have them. That of Stevensweert I hope we shall have by the beginning of the next week; and as soon as we have those troops again with us, I shall do my utmost with the Deputies and my lord of Athlone, that we may march between Liége and Tongres, which will oblige the marshal Boufflers to take his party off defending Tongres, or retreating behind his lines. I think he will do the last, but my lord of Athlone is of another opinion; so that he would stay till the siege of Ruremond is over, that those troops might also join us. My fears are that if we stay till that siege be finished, the ways will be so very ill that we shall not be able to carry our cannon with us, and then I am sure what we call our left wing [*i.e.*, those always against fighting] will not go, for they begin to say that they ought to be contented with what has already been done. If the French be not obliged to quit Tongres, they will have it in their power to bombard Maestricht any time this winter; besides, it will give them the advantage of quartering a very great body of troops on this side of their lines.[3]

[1] Richard Kane, *Campaigns*, second edition (1847), p. 39. This gentleman volunteer had been wounded a few weeks before at the siege of Kaiserswerth, and as he could hardly stand he paid two soldiers to carry and drag him forward, which they did.

[2] See particularly Captain Parker's account, p. 74.

[3] Coxe, i, 186–187.

Cardonnel to Ellis

SUTENDAL
October 2, 1702

By my next I hope to send you the like good news from Ruremond, where we reckon Mr Cohorn is more nice than wise. He is losing time there as he did before Venloo, and will not begin till he has everything ready to a tittle, though it may be half the preparations might do the business; for we reckon Stevensweert must be the strongest of the two. We do not question however to be masters of the place in four or five days after we begin. And all this good fortune I may venture to say is entirely owing to my Lord Marlborough's good conduct. For if his excellency had not been very firm in his resolutions, against not only the Dutch generals, but even the States themselves, the alarm in Flanders had carried good part of our troops that way, and entirely defeated our designs upon the Maes this campaign. I think you need no further proof of what I allege than the enclosed copy of a letter to Mons. Geldermalsen.[1]

These were days of strain for Marlborough. He had 55 battalions and 110 squadrons against Boufflers's 70 battalions and 86 squadrons. He might any day, almost at any hour, be forced to fight a battle at considerable odds; but he was better placed than Boufflers to receive supplies or to manœuvre. Thus days grew into weeks, and weeks passed while the two armies stood bristling at each other—the stronger seeking a chance to strike, the weaker always offering baffling propositions. Meanwhile, by Marlborough's orders, the captors of Venloo had advanced up the Meuse towards him. They took Stevensweert in four days and Ruremonde in nine. By October 7 Marlborough had the whole line of the Meuse clear behind him, and was about to be joined by a force which would make him much stronger than Boufflers. The Marshal and his officers had foreseen with dread this new situation. Evidently Liége itself was in the gravest danger. Already, in the third week of September, Boufflers had inspected the fortress and reinforced the citadel. But as he also feared for Bonn, which might alternatively be attacked, he felt bound to detach Tallard to strengthen it. Boufflers's only uncertainty now was what further punishment he would receive. "The King," writes Berwick, "seeing the ill turn affairs took in this campaign, recalled the Duke of Burgundy from the army to save him the mortification of being merely a spectator of the Earl of Marlborough's victories."[2] The Royal Duke made no difficulties. Indeed, he may

[1] Add. MSS., 28918, f. 77. Coxe dates this letter wrongly, and states it was written to Harley. Ellis was an Under-Secretary.
[2] *Memoirs*, i, 179.

himself have invited the recall. Anyhow he quitted his pretended command of the army in deep disgust.

Marlborough's letters show that he would formerly have been content with clearing the Meuse up to Maestricht. October was now a third spent, and it was deemed hard service to keep the troops in the field so late. But now a new favourable prospect opened before him. He tried again to win the Dutch consent to a battle to break up the French army. The Council of War again refused, and would go no further than the siege of Liége. This was certainly far bigger "frute" than Venloo, and would crown the campaign. Liége was the only remaining passage by which the French garrisons on the Rhine, at Rheinberg, Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Bonn, could be rapidly aided or rescued. The Dutch Government, knowing the importance the French attached to Liége and what a large part it played in their affairs on the Rhine, feared that an advance on that place would lead to a battle. All had gone so well without incurring that awful risk and expense. Why jeopardize it? Why not take their profits and settle into winter quarters? But here was this English commander who was able to transform everything at his touch, who seemed as he moved to and fro about the countryside invariably to impose his will on the formidable French; here was this unproved man, whom they had with such difficulty withheld from fighting battles which he declared he could win (and perhaps he could—no one could tell), who now wanted more. Still, their generals were all in favour of the siege. Their own hearts were cheered by everything that had happened. How gloriously different was their situation in October from what it had been in June! Their confidence had grown. Marlborough got leave to move.

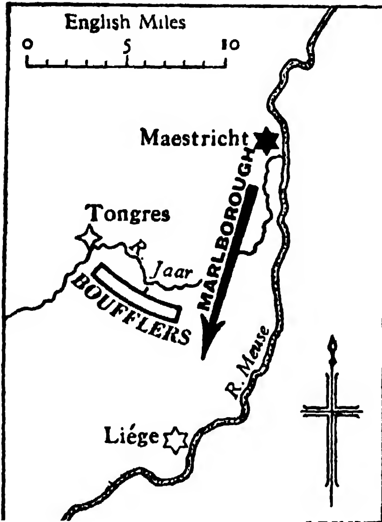
At this time we must note the comment of Deputy Geldermalsen, written at the time, which shows the stresses. "It is impossible to describe the scorn with which he [Marlborough] judges Lord Athlone, his irresolutions, his weakness of opening himself to nobodies, and following their advice in the teeth of decisions definitely taken."[1] This is the first of several evidences of Marlborough's vehement and fierce behaviour behind the scenes, which were the counterpart of his inexhaustible patience in public.

Boufflers had orders from Paris on no account to allow Liége to fall into the hands of the allies. Easy to say: but he was now definitely weaker than Marlborough. He therefore sent reinforcements into Liége and withdrew behind the Jaar stream, a tributary of the Meuse,

[1] To Heinsius, October 14; von Noorden, i, 265.

fortifying himself at Tongres and hoping by threatening Marlborough's right to cover Liége and also to prevent a movement into Brabant, should that be Marlborough's purpose.

Marlborough received permission to act on the 12th. At midnight precisely on the 13th he marched all night to the southward, crossing the Jaar before dawn between Boufflers and the Meuse. He could now besiege Liége; but he wanted to attack Boufflers. The proposed battle was, of course, vetoed, and the siege of Liége began. Boufflers, feeling his rôle exhausted, withdrew behind the Lines of Brabant. The burghers of Liége opened the gates of the town to the allies, and the siege was confined to the citadel and to the Chartreuse fort, a detached work of considerable strength. These were stern operations. The full bombardment of the citadel began on the 20th, and by the 22nd the destruction of both ramparts and magazines was such that the engineers reported that the breach was fit to be stormed. Marlborough offered the governor honourable terms for immediate surrender. M. de Violaine replied that "it would be time to think of that six weeks after." Whereupon, on the afternoon of the 23rd, the British troops headed the general assault. Without firing a musket till they came to the closest quarters, the allies pierced the counterscarp and the covered way, passed the ditch, mounted the breach, and took the place "by dint of sword." The governor was taken prisoner in the breach. His officers beat a parley, "but the victorious allies, being already in the place, would hear none of it, and had killed all they met, if the French had not thrown down their arms and begged quarter, which they obtained."[1] Captain Parker says, however, "Our men gave no quarter for some time so that the greater part of the garrison was cut to pieces."[2] The British alone lost above five hundred killed and wounded, or perhaps one-sixth of their numbers engaged, and the troops were



MARLBOROUGH MOVES ON LIÉGE

[1] Lediard, i, 190.
[2] Parker, p. 75.

slow to pause. Important treasures in money and valuable stores were captured or partly pillaged before the soldiers could be calmed. More than one-third of the defenders were destroyed. The rest of the eight thousand men were given 'quarter at discretion.'

The three battalions defending the Chartreuse had been eye-witnesses of the fate of the citadel. Nevertheless their commander resolved to abide the bombardment. It took six days to carry the heavy batteries across the river and plant them opposite the Chartreuse. Then, after four hours' bombardment, the garrison begged for terms. They were refused the honours of war (drums beating, flags flying, bullet in the teeth, etc.), but accorded 'honourable terms,' and marched out disarmed, "with their hands in their pockets." This episode cost the French in all nearly ten thousand soldiers, and in those days soldiers were hard to come by and valuable.

Some of Marlborough's unpublished letters to Godolphin reveal the rigour of the fighting.

Before Liége
Oct. 16, 1702

*Our march upon Thursday night gave so great alarm to the French that they marched a-Friday morning early, and abandoned Tongres with such haste that they have left all their wheel-barrows, shovels, pickaxes, and everything else with which they have been fortifying that place for above this month. They are now encamped near Landes, about seven leagues from this town. We had possession of the gates of this place a-Saturday night, and we have now three English, and three Dutch battalions in the place; the French have eight battalions in the citadel and four in the Chartreuse. The difficulty of getting the cannon up these hills, is the occasion of our not opening the trenches till to-morrow night. The Chartreuse, being on the other side of the Meuse, is not to be attacked till the Citadel is taken. However I hope in a fortnight's time we may be masters of the whole; if it please God we have fair weather. . . .

I believe this may find you at Newmarket and if Lord Churchill be with you, you will let him know that I hope to see him by the end of this month, for my stay at The Hague will be very short. . . .

Marlborough to Godolphin

Before Liége
October 23, 1702

I wrote to you this morning in haste, and gave you an account that the counterscarp of the citadel was to be attacked, which was done this afternoon. After the French were beaten out of the counterscarp, our men attacked the breach, and after a resistance of half an hour

they carried it. The governor was taken in the breach by an English lieutenant, which shows that the Queen's subjects were the first upon the breach. This has been an action of much vigour, so that it is impossible to say too much of the bravery that was shown by all the officers and soldiers. The governor and great numbers of their officers are already brought to my quarters.[1]

Marlborough to Godolphin

LIÉGE
Oct. 26, 1702

★Before this can come to you her Majesty must have opened the Parl: in which I wish her with all my heart and soul good success. The weather beginning to be bad makes the removal of the cannon go on very slowly, so that I am afraid we shall not have our batteries ready [for the Chartreuse] till Saturday morning. As soon as the French had the news of the citadel being taken they decamped, having first demolished St Tron[d]. We have put a garrison into Tongres, and if it had not been thus late in the season, (but [for] that we might have hoped for ten days good weather), I think they could not have hinder'd us from taking Huy. I am now giving the necessary orders to the 40,000 men paid by H.M. for their winter quarters, so that I hope by this day senight I may begin my journey towards The Hague.

We are taking methods that those that remain of the eight regiments taken in the citadel, shall not do us much hurt the next campaign; and if that of the Chartreuse stays till the breach is made, they will not be better used than their companions. But I believe they will not stay the utmost extremity, as you will see by the enclosed letter of Marshal Boufflers, [here follows one of the few touches of humour in which Marlborough ever indulged] which was brought me last Saturday by a spy of his, which I gained some time ago, so that he has had an opportunity ever since of cheating us both.

In your next you will be pleased to let me receive all your commands of what I am to do at The Hague.

Marlborough to Godolphin

LIÉGE
Oct. 30, 1702

★Since my last I have had none from you, so that I shall trouble you with nothing, but what we are a-doing here As soon as our cannon and bombs began to fire yesterday at the Chartreuse, they hung out a flag; and last night the capitulations were signed. Cardonnel sends them to the Secretary. We are in possession of a gate, and they march out to-morrow. I hope all necessary orders may be given, that I may march out with the army a-Thursday; for we must repass the Jaar before we divide. I reckon a-Saturday, the troops will be able

[1] Coxe, i, 189–190.

to march to their several quarters, and then I shall begin my journey for The Hague, lying the first night at Ruremond.

Then follows an explanation of the treatment meted to the survivors of the garrison.

I hope the measures that are taken for what remains of the eight battalions taken in the citadel will make them incapable of doing much hurt the next campaign. 1733 were sent for Holland last Saturday, and 166 officers will be sent thither upon Wednesday next.

These strokes, one upon the other, establishing beyond question the victory of the allies in the northern theatre, were watched with a kindling enthusiasm by the famous general who fought in the south. From the scene of his disputed victory at Luzzara Prince Eugene wrote to Marlborough the first extant letter in their correspondence.

FROM THE CAMP NEAR LUZZARA
October 2, 1702

★MILORD,

I feel the more deeply honoured by Your Excellency's letter of yesterday[1] assuring me that you interest yourself in the affairs of this country since I have long desired to become acquainted with a man who fills with such dignity the command of an army only accustomed to obey one of the greatest kings in the world. I do not doubt that the campaign will end in your quarter as fortunately as it has begun; as for the affairs of this country the superiority of the enemy prevents advantage being taken of the recent action: it is to be hoped that the situation will change and this army will soon be placed in a state to act offensively. I await with impatience news from the land where you are, being interested in glory above all men.[2]

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 30.

[2] The following is the original form of this letter:

"DU CAMP PREST DE LUZZARA
"*ce* 2 *Octbre* 1702

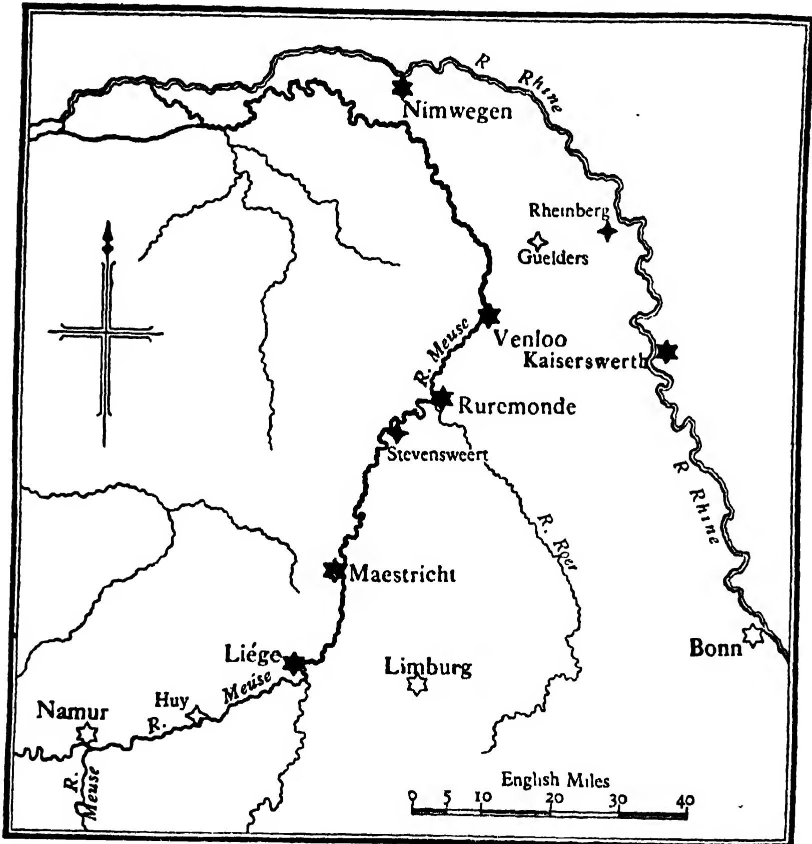
★"MILORD,

"L'honneur que vous m'avez hier voulu faire de m'assurer par la lettre que V.E. m'at fait l'honneur de m'écrire que vous vous interessé aux affaires de ce pais m'est d'autant plus sensible qu'il y at longtemp que je souhaitais d'estre connu d'un homme qui remplit si dignement le commandement d'une armée qui n'etait accoutumé d'obeir qua un des plus grands rois de la terre. Je ne doute pas que la campagne ne finirat dans vos quartiers aussi heureusement qu'elle at commencé, quant aux affaires de ce pais la superiorité des ennemis empesche de profiter des avantages de la derniere action il faut esperer que les conjonctures changeront et qu'en peu de temp on mettrat cette armée en estat d'agir offensivement. J'atens avec impatience des nouvelles du pais ou vous este, m'interessant plusque personne a la gloire.

"De V.E.
"tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur,
"EUGENE DE SAVOYE"

Marlborough's answer is in the *Dispatches*, i, 52.

The strategic consequences of the capture of Liége were of higher importance than the heavy losses of the enemy. The French had been expelled from the Meuse and the lower Rhine. The Archbishopric of Cologne and the Bishopric of Liége had been recovered from their hands. Already by the end of the campaign an ally of the



FORTRESSES OF THE MEUSE AND RHINE, END OF 1702

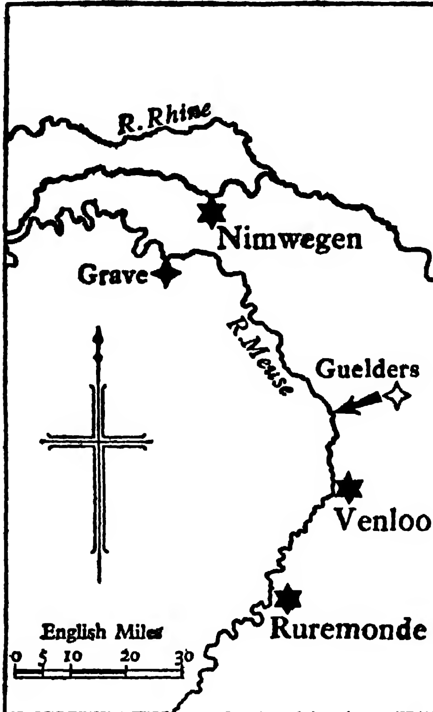
Great King, the priestly Elector of Cologne, was wandering through the Netherlands without territory, army, or revenue. The navigation of the two great rivers was now open to the allies, and to the allies only. Their garrisons occupied Kaiserswerth, Venloo, Ruremonde, Stevensweert, Maestricht, and Liége. Marlborough arranged for the winter siege of Rheinberg, which fell eventually on February 9, 1703. The new campaign could be begun under favourable

conditions. The first army of France had been powerless to prevent these losses. To the French the end of the campaign was an intense relief. "We in the camp on the Mehaigne," wrote Berwick, "heard this with great content; for in the mood to let everything slide in which we found ourselves any further operations of the enemy would not have met with any resistance on our side." What a testimony to the dominance which Marlborough had asserted upon the minds as well as the movements of the enemy! This new man, those sure marches, that compelling strategy, had transformed the scene. The Dutch, who when they gave Marlborough the command were crouching in the deep anxiety of valiant, puzzled men under the guns of Nimwegen, were now, less than five months later, masters of a territory many times greater than all that King William had gained in eight campaigns. They no doubt plumed themselves that all had been done without fighting a battle. They were equally satisfied with their general and with themselves. The least contented man in the allied army was Marlborough. He might rejoice at what had been gained, but he also knew what had been lost. He had not been allowed to strike one of those crashing blows in the field which he believed would have given him the necessary control of the war, and might have led swiftly to its victorious end. He had not been allowed to make war, but only to play military chess. Undoubtedly he had won the game.

In the first week of November the armies, except the troops besieging Rheinberg, dispersed into winter quarters, and their commander set out upon his journey for England, home, and the political crisis. And now we must describe the hazardous adventure which befell him.

Much the best way to The Hague was to be towed down the Meuse. On November 2 the Commander-in-Chief embarked in a 'yacht' at Maestricht. He had with him the two Dutch Deputies, General Opdam, some personal attendants, and an escort of twenty-five men. He joined Cohorn, who travelled in a larger boat with a guard of sixty soldiers, at Ruremonde. It was arranged that fifty horsemen should reconnoitre the country, and keep pace along the banks with the vessels by day and protect them at night. These seemed ample precautions against any French raiding parties which might be abroad. But after passing Venloo, where a new cavalry escort took charge, various accidents occurred. The larger boat outstripped the smaller, and the cavalry escort were forced by the lie of the land to quit the river-bank. The French still held the

fortified and marsh-protected town of Guelders, far behind the allied front. A trap was laid for persons of high consequence descending the river from the armies, and above all for the Commander-in-Chief. The lieutenant chosen for this service had special knowledge of the country. He was an Irish deserter from the Dutch service named Farewell, who had fled from Maestricht under accusation of conspiring to burn the magazines. He had taken refuge in Guelders, and had been accepted as a partisan leader by the French. In the darkness of the night this desperate man led his troop with stealth to that point on the river where the cavalry escort would be forced to diverge. They pounced upon the 'yacht,' drew it to the bank by the tow-rope, fired a volley, and threw a bouquet of hand-grenades on board. Before any resistance could be set up they had Marlborough, Opdam, and his two colleagues in their hands.



THE GUELDERS AMBUSCADE

Catastrophe! Here Fortune sported with Destiny, and many great tales might have perished unborn. However, the raiders proceeded according to the customs of war. They knew the two Deputies; but all the Dutchmen had passes signed by the Duke of Burgundy to free them from annoyance on their voyage. The lieutenant knew Opdam, and said at once that he had "stood sentry a hundred times over his tent." Marlborough had no pass; not caring to be beholden to his enemies, he had trusted to his escort. But Fortune was at heart his faithful friend. While the Deputies' papers were being scrutinized in the lantern-light of the cabin one of his secretaries, or clerks rather, Stephen Gell, slipped into his hand a pass accorded to his brother, General Churchill, which had not been

used. This was one of the situations for which Marlborough's gifts were well suited. With perfect calm and in the most natural manner he tendered the pass to the leader of the raiders.

A prolonged parley followed. All British historians tell us that the lieutenant did not know Marlborough's face, and Marlborough in his letter of November 8, probably to Hedges, says, "I have desired Mr Cardonnel to send you a particular account of my having been in the power of a French party near five hours, but I thank God they did not know me but took me for Lieutenant-General Churchill. . . ." The validity of the passport was argued at length. No one knows what was said on either side. It seems that the lieutenant chose at last to release Marlborough upon the pass which was made out for his brother Churchill, which was out of date and did not cover transit by water; or alternatively he allowed this English general, evidently of the highest rank, to count as one of the two servants or secretaries allowed upon the pass of Field Deputy Geldermalsen. It is certain that he and his men took all the money and plate out of the vessel because it was not mentioned in the passports, carried off the crew, the cook, and the escort of twenty-five soldiers as prisoners of war, and allowed the three gentlemen and their servants to continue their journey by water. The yacht floated on down the stream and soon overtook Cohorn and his armed guard.

The question has been properly asked by all Continental inquirers whether the lieutenant was really so stupid. Surely some great inducement was held out to him to take this favourable view. Count Goes in his dispatch[1] says "I think that the lieutenant did not sin through ignorance." Another commentator says this was one of the occasions when Milord Marlborough did not exercise his usual thrift. But if it had been only a question of money or material reward there was surely as much to be said on one side as on the other. The promises made to the lieutenant must have satisfied other desires which were dear to him. Although he had no difficulty in carrying his prisoners and their booty into Guelders, he did not himself accompany them. He vanished for a space, and when after two months he presented himself at The Hague he received a free pardon for his desertion, withdrawal of all earlier charges, and a captaincy in the Dutch service. Ailesbury says that had the French got hold of him, he would have been broken on the wheel.

While this long struggle for the heart of the lieutenant had been

[1] November 20; Klopp, x, 83.

proceeding in the cabin of the yacht, what had happened to Marlborough's cavalry escort? They heard the firing and soon learned the facts. The officer in command seems to have become panic-stricken. But perhaps he was told that any attempt at rescue would mean the immediate slaughter of the captives. He did nothing but report what had happened. The news, distorted, outsped the current of the river. By daybreak the alarm was general. Marlborough had been captured! He had been carried into Guelders! It would have been easy, says Ailesbury, to have conveyed him on horseback through the disturbed country into France. The news was received in Paris on the morning of the 10th that Marlborough and the others, all named, were taken. Directions were at once given by Louix XIV that Marlborough was to be well treated. Confirmation arrived by a second messenger from Boufflers's headquarters. It was not till the 11th that a third messenger reported that the lieutenant had let the prisoners go by mistake.

The report reached the governors of Venloo and Nimwegen. Discarding the regulations for the defence of fortified places, both officers set out at once with their whole garrisons for Guelders. "Deliver him unharmed, or we will exterminate you." The governor hastened to surrender Marlborough's cook, and to offer the looted plate for ransom. During the 4th the news reached The Hague. The States-General assembled; they ordered all troops within reach to join the forces marching upon Guelders. They sent couriers as fast as men could ride to the Emperor at Vienna to warn him to hold Marshal Villeroy, who had been captured by Prince Eugene two months before, as a hostage for exchange. Villeroy was an intimate friend and favourite of Louis XIV. We cannot tell how the Great King would have chosen, but certainly much would have depended upon his choice. However, while horses galloped, and columns of soldiers marched, and the commander of Guelders found himself threatened by trumpet with appalling penalties, and with only the cook to offer, Marlborough and his party arrived peacefully in the evening at The Hague. When it was known he was safe and approaching the city a spasm of relief and joy shook all classes. The whole population was on the bank and in the streets to receive him. In those days the populace were sparingly admitted to great affairs. The spectacle of cheering, weeping, caressing crowds was one Marlborough had never seen before; nor did he see it again until twelve years later, when he returned from disgrace and exile and was acclaimed by the Londoners. Both the peril and the wel-

come made a deep impression upon him: indeed, it is said he was moved to tears in the throng. "It was not without great difficulty he could get through them to his lodgings, to such a degree was he beloved, and of so high esteem was the name of Marlborough, with people of every condition."[1]

The letter written to Godolphin a few days later (November 9) describes not only the public emotion, but his own:

> My room is full at this time, I being more welcome to them by an accident I had, of being taken by a French party. Till they saw me, they thought me a prisoner in France, so that I was not ashore one minute, before I had great crowds of the common people, some endeavouring to take me by the hands, and all crying out welcome. But that which moved me most was, to see a great many of both sexes cry for joy. I have been extremely obliged by the kind reception I have met with: for from five in the afternoon till after ten at night, there was a perpetual firing in the streets, which is their way of rejoicing.

He added in a broad thankfulness, "I pray God bless the Queen and her undertakings, for the liberty of Christendom depends upon it."[2]

The narrow escape also left its mark. He wrote to Godolphin:

> THE HAGUE
> *November* 24, 1702
>
> *By my last letter you will have seen that I was in hopes to have left this place the next day, but now the wind seems to be [so] settled in the west, that I am out of all heart, for the wind must be fair four and twenty hours before I can stur to carry the men of war out, and my last accident makes me afraid of coming without them. . . .

Marlborough did not forget Stephen Gell. He gave him a pension of fifty pounds a year for life and secured him adequate employment in the Exchange of Prisoners Office for the whole of the war. The last letter of the five or six thousand printed in Murray's *Dispatches* is one written by Marlborough after his disgrace in 1712 to the Pensionary confiding the fortunes of "le sieur Gell" to his care.

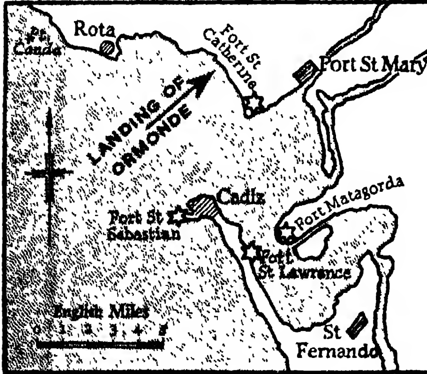
While the campaign in Flanders prospered mixed fortunes had attended the naval operations. The great expedition which the Cabinet ordered had sailed at the end of July, and anchored off Cadiz on August 12/23. Sir Stafford Fairborne, according to Rooke's journal of August 14/25,

[1] Lediard, i, 198.

[2] Coxe, i, 194.

having proposed to the Admiral his forcing the harbour and destroying the eight French galleys which lay under the walls of Cadiz, he [the Admiral] called a council of flag officers to consider the same; but upon mature debate it was unanimously judged unreasonable and impracticable *to hazard any the least frigate* on such an attempt.

Fairborne maintained his opinion before the House of Lords Committee which subsequently inquired into the failure of the expedition. In two or three days a strong boom was placed across the entrance and ships were sunk in the channel by the enemy. What was hopeful before became impossible now. Sir George Rooke followed the temptation of the line of least resistance in landing the troops to capture the forts from the shore. Ormonde readily consented, and a prolonged series of desultory operations ensued, accompanied by pillage and sacrilege, tales of which spread far and wide throughout Spain. Meanwhile the defence grew continually stronger, and after a month it was decided to re-embark the soldiers and sail for home.

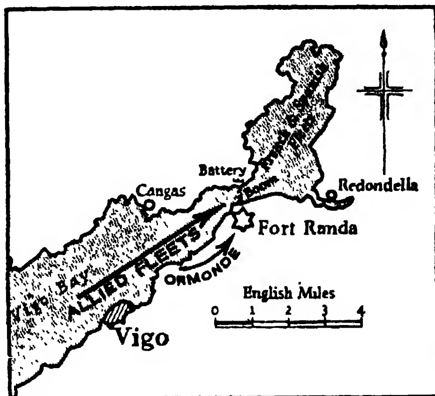


CADIZ

The ignominy was, however, relieved by a lucky windfall. As Rooke and Ormonde, on the worst of terms and each blaming the other, were returning disconsolately home, news was brought that the Spanish treasure fleet with the millions of the Indies aboard had run into Vigo Bay. Excited councils of war ensued. It was decided to raid the harbour. This was protected by a boom and batteries, behind which lay the enemy squadrons of forty-one vessels, including fifteen ships of the line. To reach them and their treasure it was necessary to break the boom and enter the long sleeve of a completely landlocked harbour under the heaviest fire from the shore. One writer has said of Rooke that "he swooped upon his prey and, with same spirit as at La Hogue, hacked through the boom, struck panic into his foes, and overwhelmed them in destruction";[1]

[1] Callender, *The Naval Side of British History*, p. 134.

another that "he lay in his berth, ill of gout, far down the bay."[1] On October 12/23 Vice-Admiral Hopsonn in the *Torbay*, followed by all but the heaviest English and Dutch battleships, braved the fire of the batteries, crashed through the boom, and penetrated the inner harbour. Here a fierce battle was fought with the French warships, while Ormonde with two thousand soldiers attacked the principal fort from the land. Whether the lure of gold or the sting of Cadiz or both inspired the leaders, at last they let loose their brave men, who fought with indomitable fury. By sundown they were masters of Vigo Bay. The entire enemy fleet was sunk, burned, or captured. Not one escaped. The treasures of the Indies were frantically carried inland by mules before the action; but enough remained for the victors to bear home a million sterling to sustain the Treasury and appease Parliament.



VIGO BAY

Although the edge was taken off the Cadiz fiasco by the brilliant event in Vigo Bay, the House of Lords insisted upon a searching inquiry into the conduct of Rooke and Ormonde at Cadiz. As these two high officers were still in violent enmity, it seemed as if the inquiry might prove fruitful. Marlborough with his usual common sense pointed out to both parties through Godolphin how little they had to gain by blackening each other's records.

Marlborough to Godolphin

THE HAGUE
November 21

My letters tell me that the Duke of Ormond is governed by people that will incline him to accuse Sir George Rooke. By what I am told here, I should think it would be more for his grace's service, and all the rest of the officers, that the conduct at Cadiz should not be inquired into; for what can be said for staying 26 days at Port St Mary; for, if Cadiz was to be attacked, they should not have stayed there; and if the taking of Cadiz was not thought feasible, then they should not have

[1] Trevelyan, *England under Queen Anne*, i, 270. Certainly he took no active part in the execution of the plan.

lost time, but have re-embarked, to have attempted what [else] was in their instructions.[1]

Under these suggestive warnings the Admiral and the General made a fairly obdurate joint defence before the Committee. Nevertheless the Navy and its important expeditionary force had during 1702 produced no results which had the least influence upon the general strategy of the war. Had they shown at Cadiz one-half of the spirit of Vigo Bay, the Sea Powers would have been masters of the Mediterranean in 1703. With Cadiz in their hands it must have been easy to secure Minorca in the next stage; and the presence of the allied fleet off the Riviera and the Italian coasts would have altered in a sense favourable to the allies the character of every forthcoming political and military event in that theatre. Party men drew the moral that the Whig policy on land under Marlborough had succeeded, while the Tory policy at sea had failed, and their bickerings proceeded on this basis. But this does less than justice to the Cabinet, which under Marlborough's general guidance had both ashore and afloat pursued strategic aims which were true, farseeing, and in harmony.

[1] Coxe, i, 198.

Chapter Eight

THE OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY BILL

1702–3—WINTER

QUEEN ANNE was overjoyed by all she heard from Europe. Here was the admirable Mr Freeman, long the unfailing friend and champion of "poor unfortunate, faithful Morley," of whom every one now at last spoke so well. Her chosen Captain and Minister had returned home with laurels from the wars very different from those which "Mr Caliban" had ever gained—he who had never even acknowledged our congratulations upon Namur. And what was Namur compared to Venloo, Ruremonde, Liége, and all the others; not to speak of the French being smitten and chased time after time; and both Houses of Parliament so pleased about it all? Nothing would content her but that he must be made Duke, and £5000 a year must be settled upon him and his descendants for ever. Thus only could he maintain the station she had accorded him. Surely the House of Commons would not object to that. And dear, beloved Mrs Freeman—how proud she ought to be of her lord! How the Queen wished she could do more for them! Thus in the goodness and gratitude of her heart thought Queen Anne. But both Sarah and the Parliament were a good deal cooler. Sarah manifested a violent opposition to the dukedom; and the Commons would have nothing to do with the perpetual grant. Both have left their reasons on record.

The Queen prepared her reward for Marlborough with all that love of a surprise with which a mother would surround a birthday present to her child. She contrived it with her Ministers in secret, and only on October 22 wrote to Sarah:

> Lord Treasurer intends to send you a copy of the address of the House of Lords which is to be given me to-morrow, and that gives me an opportunity of mentioning a thing to you that I did not intend to do yet. It is very uneasy to your poor unfortunate, faithful Morley to think that she has so very little in her power to show how truly sensible I am of all my lord Marlborough's kindness, especially at a

time when he deserves all that a rich crown could give. But since there is nothing else at this time, I hope you will give me leave as soon as he comes to make him a duke. I know my dear Mrs Freeman does not care for anything of that kind nor am I satisfied with it, because it does not enough express the value I have for Mr Freeman, nor nothing ever can how passionately I am yours, my dear Mrs Freeman.[1]

In after-years Sarah described her feelings on receiving this gracious, charming letter—every sentence poised to enhance the gift—the like of which the highest in the land might covet in vain.

> When I read the letter first . . . I let it drop out of my hand and was for some minutes like one that had received the news of a death of one of her dear friends. . . . I was so easy for [indifferent to] anything of that kind, having before [already] all that was any use, by which it is plain I have no great taste for grandeur.

According to her, all that mattered was to be a peer with a seat in the legislature. "I do think there is no advantage in going in at a door; and when a rule is settled, I like as well to follow five hundred as one." She proceeded to dwell upon the burdens of a dukedom, especially "in a family where there are many sons. Though at that time I had myself but one, yet I might have had more, and the next generation a great many."[2]

This might pass for affectation if it were not confirmed by facts. It is evident that she wrote at once to her husband urging him to refuse the dukedom. Her letter does not exist, but we can easily reconstruct her arguments from his reply. He, on the contrary, was greatly pleased.

John to Sarah

THE HAGUE
November 15

> You know I am very ill at compliments but I have a heart full of gratitude; therefore pray say all you can to the Queen for her extraordinary goodness to me. As you have let me have your thoughts as to the dukedom you shall have mine in short, . . . but be assured I shall have a mind to nothing but as it may be easy to you. I do agree with you that we ought not to wish for a greater title till we have a better estate. Your other objection is also very just that this promotion may bring great solicitations upon the Queen which I am sure I would not give occasion for. The Queen's goodness in being desirous to establish my family answers the first, since that may be done this winter; for I agree with you that it should be done before the title.[3]

[1] Coxe, i, 202. [2] *Conduct*, p. 304. [3] Coxe, i, 204.

Two days later he wrote again after having talked over Sarah's objections with the Pensionary, "believed to be a very judicious man" and "very much my friend." Heinsius was all for the dukedom. When Marlborough insisted that it would come better at the end of the war he replied that it was an act of justice which would do the Queen good with all the princes abroad, especially in Holland, where he hoped she would employ him as long as the war lasted. "He said," wrote Marlborough, "if it were not done now in the heat of everybody's being pleased with what I had done, it would at any other time be thought the effect of favour, which would not be so great an honour to my family nor to the Queen's service." Heinsius could have wished the Queen had bestowed the honour while Marlborough was actually with the army, just as the King of France had done for Villars. The argument that other families in England would press for the same title he brushed aside. If it were done at once, it would obviously be for war services. As for Sarah's point, which Marlborough repeated,

> that I should make a worse figure in England by being a duke than as I am till I had the estate for it, he said the Queen's kindness was such that I need not doubt a fortune, and that whatever was done at this time for my fortune as well as the title would be quite without envy since all the people were pleased with what I had done.[1]

Finally Heinsius remarked "that it was not reasonable to expect ever to have so much success in any other campaign as in this," and ended "in begging me for the good of the common cause, the Queen's service and my own sake that I should think this a proper time of being distinguished." All these reasons are taken from the long report of his interview with the Pensionary which Marlborough laboriously wrote out for Sarah. Weighing the matter dispassionately, he ended by deciding that it was his duty to comply with the Queen's desires and his own.

How typical is all this of Marlborough's method and demeanour! What trouble he took to persuade his wife! Of course he knew beforehand the advice which Heinsius would give. Indeed, it was obviously for the general advantage that the Commander-in-Chief of a confederate army in which so many princes served as subordinates, whose opponents were the Blood Royal of France, should be raised to a high pinnacle. Marlborough's advancement was effective propaganda to proclaim the undoubted success of the campaign.

[1] The Hague, November 17; Coxe, i, 204.

Still, it was better these things should be said by the Pensionary. We do not think he cared too much about the titular rank. Certainly he cared less about the dukedom than about the income to support it, and did not mean to have the one without the other. But how much rather would he have been rewarded by that free, unfettered command of his army which none but he among the captains of history have been denied!

The new Parliament met on October 20, and the Lords congratulated the Queen. The Commons added that "the vigorous support of Your Majesty's Allies and the wonderful progress of Your Majesty's arms under the conduct of the Earl of Marlborough have signally retrieved the ancient honour and glory of the English nation." This affront to the memory of King William was intended by the Tories to irritate the Whigs, and for this purpose was well devised. Accordingly the House divided on the word "retrieved," "all who had any favour at Court, or hoped for any, voting for it."[1] Only eighty Whigs could be mustered against the Tory majority. A solemn thanksgiving was appointed; and on November 12 the Queen, with Sarah at her side, and attended by both Houses of Parliament, proceeded in state to St Paul's amid the tumultuous acclamations of the London crowds. The Tories in the Commons had taken pains to couple Marlborough with Ormonde and Rooke. Thereby they sensibly reduced the value of their tribute, and, indeed, of their judgment, but at the same time they proclaimed their preference for naval expeditions rather than Continental warfare. These signs of a cool and critical temper towards Marlborough in the new Parliament were ignored by the Queen. Marlborough did not return from The Hague till November 28/December 9. Sarah went to meet him at Margate, and he came into London in strict privacy, avoiding all popular demonstrations. "Il se comporte d'une modestie distinguée."[2] He replied in a becoming manner to the thanks which Sir Edward Seymour at the head of a Committee tendered him in the name of the House of Commons. On December 2 the Queen declared her intention to make him a Duke.

A Government is naturally shy of proposing a grant of money to its leading member, who must, however indirectly, be involved in the advice given to the Sovereign. Godolphin's letters to Harley tell the tale in modern terms. On December 9 the Treasurer writes

[1] N. Tindal, *The Continuation of Mr Rapin's History of England*, xv (iii of Continuation), 434.

[2] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 214, f. 357.

to the Speaker that Marlborough, having been given a grant by the Queen for the support of his dukedom during her life, had been encouraged by his friends "to think it will not be difficult at this time to get this latter grant confirmed by Act of Parliament to him and the heirs of his body." He asked the Speaker's advice as to the procedure, and added that Sir Edward Seymour had been "very gracious" to Marlborough in this matter. The next day he says that Marlborough has had some talk with Sir Christopher Musgrave, and great professions from him and Sir Edward Seymour, but "much warmer from the younger part of the House."[1] Thus it seemed that the Government was agreed and the House agreeable. The Queen sent her message to the Commons, announcing that she had granted the Duke of Marlborough and his heirs a pension of £5000 a year upon the revenues of the Post Office for the support of his title during her lifetime. "If," the message proceeded, "it had been in Her Majesty's power, she would have granted the same term in the pension as in the honour; and she hopes you will think it so reasonable in this case as to find some proper methods for doing it."

But here immediately began animated and unpleasant debates. Permanent alienations of the public revenue to individuals had long been one of the best targets of Tory attack. How bitterly had they inveighed against King William's grants to his Dutch favourites! Upon all the hustings of the recent elections they had denounced such practices. Must the new Parliament begin its life by so incongruous an act? This mood of the Commons was not lost upon Marlborough's colleagues, and the natural resistances of the assembly were stirred by an open division which at once appeared in the ranks of the Government. Seymour, who but two days before had been "very gracious," led the opposition; and the Tory veteran, Musgrave, Clerk of the Ordnance, Marlborough's direct subordinate, from whom he had had "great professions," dwelt in a sour-sweet speech upon the pay and allowances the Captain-General was already receiving from British and Dutch sources. These certainly amounted to £60,000 a year, and little imagination is required to understand the feelings which were excited among much poorer people.

By December 12 Godolphin was writing to Harley:

> I cannot dissemble to you that I am very much concerned at the little success which I find the Queen's message is like to meet within

[1] Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 53 *et seq.*

sign of respect. But Marlborough registered the impression that the Tory Members were unfriendly to him. Had they not coupled the disreputable or flashy performances of Rooke and Ormonde with what Europe admitted was a most remarkable campaign? The behaviour of the Tory Ministers and place-holders, who after committing themselves to the grant had turned their sails so swiftly to catch an unexpected hostile breeze, was a measure alike of their character and their sentiments. It would have been more agreeable to the Muse of History if Marlborough had refused all honours and rewards, and had met the addresses of the Commons by saying that owing to the heavy charges upon the public he had resolved to fight the next campaign on half-pay. But then he would not have been the Marlborough who gained the victories. For certain it is that this same matter-of-fact care for his own interests and desire to found a powerful family in an enduring State was an inherent part of his great deeds. He was a builder for England, for posterity, and for himself. No one of these purposes could be removed without impairing the others, and part of his genius lay in their almost constant harmony.

Queen Anne was at this time tenderly concerned about the position of her beloved husband. She would have liked to make him Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Alliance; but the Dutch would not agree. She had wished to invest him with regal dignity as her Consort; but Parliament showed plainly that this was not to be done. At least, then, she would make sure that he should not lack comforts if he lived beyond her span. One hundred thousand pounds a year was the income which she sought to have settled upon him for his life. She moved her Ministers to lay her wish before Parliament. The charge was heavy for those days, and under all the burdens of war. Yet the Commons made haste to gratify the Queen. They passed the necessary Bill virtually without opposition. But some one had mischievously slipped in a little clause which caused the Lords to "blow up"[1] in anger. This clause specially exempted Prince George of Denmark from an ambiguity in the Act of Succession designed to exclude "strangers, though naturalized," from English offices and peerages in the event of a Hanoverian prince becoming king. The proposed exemption of Prince George seemed to imply that all King William's peerages of "strangers, though naturalized," would lapse at the death of Anne. This roused the Whigs. The Lords, moreover, saw at once that this proviso wore

[1] Godolphin to Harley, Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 54.

the aspect of a tack. Here was an important political issue to be affected or defined by an irrelevant clause in a Money Bill. They saw themselves committed not only to its provisions, but, far more grievous, to recognizing the procedure of a tack.

Now, the peers of all parties in large majority had banded themselves together by solemn resolution to vote against any measure which contained a tack. Once let the rule be broken and their power was gone. When the Commons blandly explained that this provision about Prince George was only an additional mark of their loyalty to the Crown, the Peers replied in terms of scorn. It seemed certain that the Bill would be rejected by the Lords, and Queen Anne looked about her in lively distress. She did not weigh the constitutional question which was at stake. She only saw that her husband was being denied through a Whig faction in the Lords the justice which the Commons would do him. On this Marlborough and Godolphin joined with Rochester and Nottingham in using the whole influence and power of the Government and the Tory Party to procure compliance with the Royal will. All pulled together for the Queen to show who could pull the hardest. Thus the measure was carried as it stood.

Among those who protested against it was Marlborough's son-in-law, now Earl of Sunderland.[1] The rigid Whig purist did not hesitate to set himself in opposition in this very personal business of the Crown to the whole interest and policy of the Marlborough family, with which he was now linked. The Duke, who had originally been against the match, no doubt refrained from saying to his wife, "I told you so." But Sarah was transported with a fury, the reasons for which, though easy to discern, are not well explained in most history books. Night and day, in season and out of season, she was labouring to reconcile the Queen to the Whigs. Mrs Freeman was using every argument and persuasion which from a life-long experience she knew would be effective upon Mrs Morley to convince her that the Whigs were just as good friends to the monarchy as the Tories. She knew already that at times she was straining her favour and her friendship, profound though these were; and now here, upon a point which would pierce the Queen to her very marrow, was this young prig and coxcomb, her own son-in-law, giving a contradiction to all she had said and undoing whatever she had achieved. And this when politics were so critical, when she could see the Tory faction in the Cabinet and in Parliament

[1] His father had died on September 8, 1702.

daily labouring to supplant her lord the Captain-General and his faithful friend the Treasurer in the confidence and affections of their Royal Mistress! She felt herself tripped up by the party in whose interests she was so magnificently striving, and by the man who, of all others, should have considered her position and his own. Such experiences are annoying even to the most urbane.

However, the Bill was through, and its narrow escape made the Queen only the more grateful to her friends. But she had a long memory for those rancorous Whigs who, for all their professions about the war and the Protestant Succession, were really at heart the inveterate foes of Church and Crown. And among them all this young Lord Sunderland was the most obnoxious. How shamefully he had turned against Mr and Mrs Freeman, into whose family he had been admitted! But what could be expected from his breeding? How she had hated and feared his father in the years before the Revolution! What a disreputable, lying cheat his mother had been! The Queen remembered her character, as she had described it to her sister Mary fifteen years ago.[1] Why had Mrs Freeman and her husband let themselves be drawn into such a connexion? They were both too easy-going, too kind-hearted, too unsuspecting. The Queen felt she saw through the dangers and deceits of the world more deeply than they. The hostility which she felt henceforward towards Sunderland became of great political importance when in a few years she had to accept him as a Minister. Meanwhile she wrote her thanks to Sarah in the warmest terms.

> I am sure the prince's bill passing after so much struggle is wholly owing to the pains you and Mr Freeman have taken, and I ought to say a great deal to both of you in return, but neither words nor actions can ever express the true sense Mr Morley and I have of your sincere kindness on this and all other occasions; and therefore I will not say any more on this subject, but that to my last moment your dear unfortunate faithful Morley will be most passionately and tenderly yours.[2]

Meanwhile the new Parliament was aglow with Church and Tory fervour. Dr Sacheverell, a young and vigorous Fellow of Magdalen, had preached an election sermon which had inspired the political campaign. The majority were determined to root out the humbug of Occasional Conformity and at the same time possess themselves of many desirable places of influence and profit. In solemn conclaves, in ardent tavernings, the Members inflamed one another.

[1] See Vol. I, p. 211. [2] Coxe, i, 210.

There were not wanting men to see in this burning question a path which might lead them far. Here a new actor, destined to play one of the decisive parts, makes his entry upon our stage. Henry St John had been elected as a Tory in 1701 to William's last Parliament. His father had been mulcted £16,000 for a pardon from Charles II for killing a Sir William Estcourt in a brawl in 1684, and bore besides a drunken, rakish reputation. But the fortunes of his house were still substantial, and Henry, after undergoing the usual treatment at Eton and on a foreign tour, arrived in London well furnished with money and representative of the family borough of Wootton Bassett. He reproduced his father's traits, and now at twenty-four was a roysterer and hard-drinker, who lived notoriously with a Miss Gumley, described as "the most expensive demirep in the kingdom." It was said that, impelled by liquor or a wager, he had run naked through the park. But he had besides other qualities of which his father had given no sign. He was from his earliest efforts a most brilliant Parliamentary speaker who always commanded the attention, if not the agreement, of the House of Commons. He had elevation of thought, breadth of view, and rare distinction in his use and comprehension of the English tongue. He also spoke French exceedingly well, and had read discursively but widely in English and European history. Clever, apt, and audacious in the highest degree, he was possessed by ambitions which no scruples were ever seen to hamper. He picked his early steps in politics shrewdly. He chose both a Patron and a Question. The Patron was Harley, and already in 1702 Henry St John by his charming, vivacious assiduity had personally ingratiated himself with that eminent politician. The Question was Occasional Conformity.

In association with the old and upright Bromley, Member for Oxford, who lent the needed element of gravity and piety to his proceedings, St John began in the opening session of Parliament to make an exposure of the *pro forma* communicant-Dissenters a leading Parliamentary issue. The Tory Party, in the temper with which it glowed, took fire. The controversy soon eclipsed all others. The Occasional Conformity Bill was first brought forward in the autumn of 1702. It sought to destroy the abuse by imposing fines on any public official who, having attended Anglican communion presumably for the purpose of qualifying for office, had afterwards reverted to his non-conformist manner of worship. The fines were so heavy as to be prohibitive, and the aid of the 'common informer' was invoked for their enforcement. This measure passed the Commons

by a large majority, and was carried by an excited mob of two hundred Members to the Lords. Here the Bill encountered a small but resolute Whig majority, composed in part of King William's thirty peers and his Broad Church bishops.

An immediate conflict between the two Houses arose. Great stresses also showed themselves in the Cabinet and above it, which cast a revealing light upon the politics of the whole reign. The Queen was for the Bill. She felt that the utilizing of the sacrament for the purpose of gaining a place of profit or influence was a malpractice from which the Church she loved and deemed she understood so well should be protected. Her uncle Rochester, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, who remained in London and would rather have been Lord Treasurer, felt both as a Churchman and as a "Highflyer" a strong and sincere indignation, which was in no way lulled by the vehement support which the Bill had gathered in the House of Commons. The two Secretaries of State, Nottingham and his colleague Hedges, and, of course, Sir Edward Seymour, with his West of England faction, were convinced that so just a proposal could not be resisted. It was true that it would obliterate their Whig opponents and give them mastery of the whole Government. But such considerations ought not, they judged, to weigh against a principle which involved both righteousness and religion. Even if it cost them their Whig colleagues, the minor Ministers, they still felt bound to persevere. At the worst they could fill their places with men of their own party, and each was prepared to suggest substitutes, if need be. Such vicarious sacrifices were often made in those early days of our Parliamentary and Cabinet system.

So at the outset the Queen, the Commons, the dominant Tory Party, and the characteristic Tory Ministers—the men that the party could trust—were all hot for the Bill. Against it was the barest majority of the Whigs and bishops of the House of Lords. Out-of-doors such an act of hard, calculated aggression by one half of the nation upon the other spread consternation and anger in every shire and town.

This schism was deeply embarrassing to Marlborough and Godolphin. As Tories they found it difficult to repel the arguments for the Bill. Nor did they care to begin their administration by a quarrel with their own party in full career. They did not wish to distress or upset the Queen, nor to consume their influence in persuading her against her will on a Church question, above all others. But if England were to be rent and infuriated by the same kind of

passions which had reduced her to impotence in the days of the Popish Plot, how was the war to be carried forward? The issue was for them both delicate and dangerous. In all the Cabinet discussions upon the Bill the strength of Rochester was at its height. He had his party and the majority of the House of Commons behind him. He had his Tory colleagues in a solid group. He had the genuine agreement and sympathy of the Queen. He saw in this measure a wedge, which as it was driven forward might estrange Marlborough and Godolphin from the Queen, and would certainly separate them from their party. They saw all this as well as he.

Marlborough, viewing the situation with military eye, had no intention of being brought to battle on ground which was so suited to his enemy. He and Godolphin therefore presented an oblique front to Rochester's formidable advance. They avoided his thrust by a practice, which even in our own reformed days is not unknown, of affirming their support for the principle of a Bill while taking steps to get it killed behind the scenes. They shielded Nonconformity from political ruin and preserved the national strength from a mad injury by dissembling their opinions and tricking their party. In this lamentable course they were carefully advised by Mr Speaker Harley.

Sarah was, of course, violent against the Bill. All her Whig principles and free-thinking sentiments were roused. She felt and spoke about this attempt of the Church to persecute the Chapel, and of a party majority to capture the civil offices of their opponents under a religious pretence, very much as most people would do now, if such a project were mooted. Severe stresses must have arisen between her and the Queen, and between her and the High Tory Ministers. This handsome, domineering woman, in the very centre of affairs, with her caustic tongue, her wit, her candour, and her common sense, was in herself a portent of the Age of Reason, which had already dawned. When she heard that Marlborough and Godolphin intended to vote for the Bill her wrath was extreme. We can judge the pressure she put upon her husband by a remarkable letter which he wrote her at this time.[1]

John to Sarah

I do own a great deal of what you say is right, but I can by no means allow that all the Tory party are for King James, and conse-

[1] This letter is undated, but it was most probably written in January 1703, while Rochester was still a Minister and before the division on the second reading of the Occasional Conformity Bill in the House of Lords.

> quently against the Queen, but [on] the contrary I think it is in Her power to make use of almost all, but some of the Heads, to the true interests of England, which I take to be the Protestant Succession, to the supporting of which, by the help of Almighty God, I will venture my last drop of blood. As you are the only body that could have given me happiness, I am the more concerned we should differ so much in opinions; but as I am firmly resolved never to assist any Jacobite whatsoever, or any Tory that is for persecution, I must be careful not to do the thing in the World which my Lord Rochester would most desire to have me do; which is to give my Vote against this bill. But I do most solemnly promise that I will speak to nobody living to be for it, and to show you that I would do anything that were not a ruin to the Queen, and an absolute destruction to myself, to make you easy at this time. By what has been told me, the bill will certainly be thrown out unless my Lord Treasurer and I will both speak to people, and speak in the House, which I do assure you for myself I will not do.[1]

This letter gives us a vivid glimpse of the duel which was proceeding between Marlborough and Rochester, and of the tactics which Marlborough adopted to baffle his opponent. But it has another aspect which is revealing. Evidently Sarah, in her desire to prevent her husband from voting for a Bill which would cripple the Whigs and Dissenters, had reproached him with conduct which would endanger the Protestant succession and help the Jacobites. In fact the Bill raised no such issues, and Sarah in her exaggeration displayed herself as more anti-Jacobite than Queen Anne. She used this argument because she knew it the most effective means of dissuading Marlborough, and of appealing to his fundamental prejudices. He responded at once by the most emphatic repudiation of all such ideas. "I will venture my last drop of blood. . . . I am firmly resolved never to assist any Jacobite whatsoever."

Now, John and Sarah were as closely linked together as any pair have been. They wrote to each other with perfect frankness and confidence, and with no thought of making a record for the public or posterity. Here, then, we see their deep common abhorrence of Jacobitism in all its forms and their unswerving allegiance to the Protestant Succession. Marlborough had before leaving The Hague received the Jacobite Hooke, had treated him most courteously, had put his hand upon his shoulder, and sent him away charmed with fair words. But his true position and that of his wife is exposed in this letter. It is only another proof of the fact which we assert in this account, that Marlborough pursued throughout his whole life the

[1] Coxe, i, 297.

aims of the Revolution of 1688, and fooled the Jacobites as regularly as he defeated the French.

Upon the second reading of the Occasional Conformity Bill in the House of Lords Marlborough and Godolphin marched with Rochester. The Queen's ardour can be measured from the fact that she compelled her husband, whom the Bill would have disqualified from public life, to vote for it. But as he filed into the Aye lobby the poor Prince, who suffered many vexations in his comfortable life, was heard to exclaim to the Whig teller, Wharton, of whom Queen Anne so sternly disapproved, "My heart is vid you." The second reading was carried only by twelve votes. Under the promptings of Wharton the Whigs in the Lords pursued sagacious tactics. They proposed to exempt municipal and country functionaries, and confine the Bill to Parliamentary and national office. Thus they became the champions of the many, while in no way weakening their own array. But the shrewder stroke was reserved. They carried an amendment, represented as a compromise, reducing the fines to levels where they no longer deterred. Wealthy Dissenters, having already paid something in conscience, would not find it impossible to pay a little more in cash. Thus Occasional Conformity would be brought within the means of any man of reasonable substance likely to be affected.

This expedient at once enraged and baffled the House of Commons. Here was an intrusion by the Lords into the domain of finance, over which the Commons were supreme. Here was the classic issue between the two Houses, and, as Wharton had shrewdly foreseen, the Tory majority in the Commons, halloaed on by the Whigs, set off in full cry after this potent constitutional red herring. They almost forgot that what they were hunting was Occasional Conformity. Moreover, it was noticed that the authority of the Government was not used in any whole-hearted way to push the measure. Quite a number of persons dependent upon the Government and many Tory notables associated with Marlborough were found absent from divisions to support it. A damp fog seemed to be cast upon it by the two Ministers who over-towered all others. In these commotions and divergences the first Occasional Conformity Bill went to ground safely in February 1703.

The time had now come to deal with Rochester. Rochester was the Queen's uncle. She agreed with him in Church and party. He was the lay head of the Church of England which the Queen loved. He was in many ways the leader of the Tory Party which she

favoured, and which was master in her new Parliament. But, further, Rochester had a theme and policy covering the whole action of the State, religious and secular, in peace or war. At the beginning of 1702 and 1703 he published successive volumes of his father's *History of the Rebellion* with a tendentious introduction of his own. The merit of this work stands high in our literature. To Tory England in the first years of Anne it carried an inspiring message. The Church was the foundation of the Throne, and the Church and Throne united could alone secure the freedom, safety, and advance of Britain.

But none of this availed Rochester at all when once Marlborough, choosing his moment, finally decided they could work no more together. Many and grievous were the provocations which Rochester gave. He was jealous of Marlborough, and prepared to dispute his ascendancy: but he thought Godolphin was the more vulnerable. Against Godolphin, therefore, he marshalled his influence and his faction. He would pull him down. Godolphin gone, Marlborough would be alone. He did not hesitate to criticize and oppose unpopular measures of the Government of which he was a leading member or to reveal its secrets in damaging debate. He strove ever to increase his authority in both Houses of Parliament at the expense of the Ministry and of public business. When every effort to rally him had failed Marlborough resolved that he should go. Then was seen Anne's loyalty to the old Cockpit days. What use had her uncle been to her when Mr Caliban and her own sister had tried to chase Sarah from the Court, and when Sarah's lord was in the Tower? What had he done when she had wanted her letter carried to Queen Mary? He had failed her in her darkest hour, and he had failed her in order to curry favour with the ruler of the day. But that ruler was no more; and the Princess who had vainly sought his good offices in her distress was now the Queen. Who was he to set himself against her dear and faithful friends—friends who, even against their inclinations and better judgment, as she realized, had newly obliged her by voting for the principle of the Occasional Conformity Bill? Mrs Morley, Mr and Mrs Freeman, and Mr Montgomery, joined in familiar conclave, had no doubt that the dismissal of Rochester would add to their difficulties, of which they already felt the weight. But once Mr Freeman said that it was no good trying to workwith him any more, and that he was less dangerous outside than in, the matter was settled.

Early in February 1703 Rochester was astonished by receiving

the Queen's command to go to Dublin and discharge his duties as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He took a week to measure forces, and then intimated that it was his higher duty to remain in London. Forthwith his resignation was demanded, with no choice but that of dismissal. He quitted the Queen's Government accordingly, and without a day's delay appeared at the head of the High Tories who sought to wreck it. For such a position his previous action and his ably expressed and sincerely held convictions had prepared him. This disciplinary act necessarily weakened the Government; but it made Nottingham, Hedges, and Seymour understand clearly where political power resided. Henceforward they felt that in their conflict with Marlborough and Godolphin their political resources might prove inadequate.

In the midst of these activities almost the greatest sorrow that can come to man fell upon Marlborough. His only surviving son was now sixteen. We remember him as a playmate of the poor little Duke of Gloucester. He had been at Eton and had already gone to Cambridge, where Dr Hare, afterwards celebrated as Marlborough's chaplain, whom we shall often meet during his campaigns, and eventually Bishop of Chichester, guided him in religion, morals, and learning. "Notwithstanding his high birth, splendid prospects, and courtly education," observes Archdeacon Coxe ingenuously, "he set an example of affability, regularity, and steadiness, above his years." Life began early in those days, and this handsome, eager youth wanted, of course, to go with his father to the wars. Bred in a martial atmosphere, he was thrilled by camps and soldiers, and especially by reviews and processions. His father would have liked to have him with him at the front; but his mother thought he was too young. In those days an officer on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief must be frequently under fire, and might be required at any moment to ride with a message into the hottest of the fighting. Sarah could not bring herself to let him go so young—while still a child. Let him stay one more year at Cambridge and finish his studies. Thus was it settled. But Death knows where to keep his appointments.

During the autumn of 1702 Lord Blandford often came over from Cambridge to stay with Lord Godolphin close by at Newmarket, and apparently made the best impression upon the Treasurer. There was smallpox in the town, but Godolphin thought that he, "going into no house but mine, will I hope be more defended from it by air and riding, without any violent exercise, than he could possibly

be anywhere else." Meanwhile the boy was making plans of his own to join the Army, and with a friend was intriguing for commissions in a cavalry regiment.

It was at the end of his long visit to Godolphin that the infection fell upon him. He had scarcely returned to Cambridge in February when he was struck down by virulent smallpox. Sarah was there as fast as horses could bear her, nursing him herself and invoking all that the medical knowledge of those days could do. The Queen hurried her own physicians into the royal coach and sent them posting to Cambridge. It was less than three years since the same scourge had carried off her own child. She wrote to Sarah:

Thursday morning

I writ two words to my dear Mrs Freeman yesterday, and could not help telling her again that I am truly afflicted for the melancholy account that is come again this morning of poor dear Lord Blandford. I pray God grant he may do well, and support you. And give me leave once more to beg you for Christ Jesus' sake to have a care of your dear precious self, and believe me with all the passion imaginable your poor unfortunate faithful Morley.[1]

"I wish," she added in another letter, "that the messenger who carries the medicines which my dear Mrs Freeman sends for could fly, that nothing may be wanting the moment there is any occasion."

Till all hope was abandoned John was kept away. He wrote to Sarah:

Thursday, 9 in the morning

I am so troubled at the sad condition this poor child seems to be in, that I know not what I do. I pray God to give you some comfort in this great affliction. If you think anything under heaven can be done, pray let me know it, or if you think my coming can be of the least use, let me know it. I beg I may hear as often as possible, for I have no thought but what is at Cambridge.

Medicines are sent by the doctors. I shall be impatient to the last degree till I hear from you.[2]

Thursday night

I wrote to you this morning, and was in hopes I should have heard again before this time, for I hope the doctors were with you early this morning. If we must be so unhappy as to lose this poor child, I pray God to enable us both to behave ourselves with that resignation which we ought to do. If this uneasiness which I now lie under should last long, I think I could not live. For God's sake, if there be any hope of recovery, let me know it.[3]

[1] Coxe, i, 218. [2] *Ibid.*, 220. [3] *Loc. cit.*

Shortly after writing these words he received his summons and, hurrying to Cambridge, arrived as his son expired. On the morning of Saturday, February 20, John and Sarah crept off to Holywell to endure their pangs. The Queen wrote:

St James's
Tuesday night

It would have been a great satisfaction to your poor unfortunate faithful Morley, if you would have give me leave to come to St Albans, for the unfortunate ought to come to the unfortunate. But since you will not have me, I must content myself as well as I can, till I have the happiness of seeing you here. I know nothing worth writing; but if I did, I should not trouble you with it, being sure no sort of news can be agreeable to your dear, heavy heart. God Almighty bless and comfort my dear Mrs Freeman, and be assured I will live and die sincerely yours.[1]

This blow not only cut at the natural feelings of John and Sarah, but seemed to ruin their future. Both were dynasts. To gather wealth and fame and found a family to run on down the ages was their dear—indeed, their over-dear—ambition. Now it was ended. The Duke had to make a fresh will, leaving his already large properties to Sarah in trust for his eldest daughter's husband, Mr Godolphin, to whom he desired that his titles should pass. But he was already overdue at the front. The Dutch awaited him, and the armies were entering the field. He sailed for Holland with a leaden heart in the early days of March. The will, which had not yet been engrossed, was sent after him, and his letters show the anxiety which he felt when the packet-boat containing it was reported captured by a French privateer. To Ailesbury, whom he met at The Hague, he said, "I've lost what is so dear to me, it is fit for me to retire and not toil and labour for I know not who. My daughters are all married."[2] It was in this sombre mood that he began a most harassing campaign.

[1] Coxe, i, 221.

[2] Ailesbury, ii, 558.

Chapter Nine

NEW COMBATANTS

1702–1703

The Northern War

ALTHOUGH the struggle against French domination involved all Central and Western Europe, Italy, Spain, and the New World, and may justly be called a world war, its bounds could still grow wider. During the whole of 1702 and 1703 what was called the Northern War had been waged by the Sweden of Charles XII to defend her Baltic provinces against the simultaneous attacks of Russia under Peter the Great and Poland, then united under August II to the Electorate of Saxony. The course and episodes of this considerable conflict, rendered memorable by the martial genius of Charles XII, form a minor and companion theme of hate and destruction in the general sufferings of Christendom. The Northern War, the politics of the states engaged in it, and above all the erratic, formidable personality of the Swedish King, often impinged, as will be seen, upon Marlborough's task.

The reader will remember that at the close of the seventeenth century Sweden was by far the greatest of the northern Powers. Charles XI reigned not only in the homeland of Sweden, but over an empire which comprised all that we now describe as the Baltic States—Finland, Ingria (St Petersburg), Esthonia, Livonia (Latvia), and West Pomerania (Stralsund and Stettin). Although Swedish professional discipline and valour had met its match in the Prussians at Fehrbellin in 1675, the Swedish Army still dwelt in the glories of Gustavus Adolphus. In 1697 Charles XI had died, and the crown of Sweden passed, under a regency, to a youth not yet fifteen. The great possessions of the Swedes on the mainland had long excited the natural cupidity and ambitions of their continental neighbours. Now, with a boy-king and an army believed to have passed its zenith, the Swedish Empire seemed to be a seasonable prey. All this might have come to nothing but for the revengeful machinations of a private individual. Patkul was a Livonian magnate who

had been exiled and expropriated for insufficient cause by Charles XI. He it was who wove together with tireless industry and dynamic force all the rulers and governments who coveted the Swedish inheritance. A league of Russia, Saxony, and Denmark had been formed in 1699 for the partition of Sweden; and very little had prevented Prussia from joining it.

The forces already seemed overwhelming. The three confederates expected to rob a child. Never was undeception greater: for there leapt from the Swedish throne this boy-king, deemed an easy quarry, who now burst upon Northern Europe as the most furious warrior of modern history. At all times, in any direction, at any odds, was his insatiable demand. For eighteen years, until a bullet slew him in an hour of victory, he rushed with the frenzy of genius and of mania at the throat of every antagonist. Dauntless and implacable, with cold calculation and for a long spell a charmed life, Charles XII defended and wore out his country against all comers. With the help of William III and the Anglo-Dutch fleet he had already dictated peace to Denmark in 1701, and, swiftly appearing before Narva, had put Peter the Great to flight and destroyed the Russian army. Possessed by these successes, he had turned next upon Augustus, Elector of Saxony, who was also the elected King of Poland. In this double-faced monarch Charles discerned the hub of the conspiracy against the grandeur of Sweden. There was no glory, he said, in winning victories over Muscovites: it was too easy. The deposition of Augustus from the throne of Poland became for several years his ruling purpose. Although the Swedish forces he had left in the Baltic States were eventually overwhelmed by hardship and the Russian masses, Charles XII in 1702, 1703, and 1704 conquered the greater part of Poland, defeated the Russians, Poles, and Saxons in the battles of Klissow (July 19, 1702) and Pultusk (April 21, 1703), stormed Cracow, captured Warsaw, and set up with some pretence of electoral legality a Polish king of his own.

This ferocious Northern War, conducted by both sides with the dullest savagery of barbarous ages, caused continuous anxiety to the founders of the Grand Alliance. At Versailles the hope of exploiting its complications, and if possible of enlisting the martial ardours of the Swedish King, was perseveringly pursued. The Court at Vienna might cherish possibilities of a combination with Russia for the advantage of the Empire; but the Sea Powers would have none of this. From the beginning they sought only to end or wall in a conflict which they could not but regard as a monstrous irrelevancy.

"The northern crater was to burn itself out, shut off in every direction."[1] It was in this purpose that William III in 1701 had carried a Swedish army in his fleets to curb Denmark. As the great war with France developed Marlborough and Heinsius vigilantly discouraged every tendency of the Germanic states to turn their eyes to the north or to the east. The Empire in its increasing weakness was ready to obey this grave and imperious guidance. Prussia had appetites and movements in both directions which at times were nicely balanced; and the tortuous, equivocal course of Frederick I, with his invaluable Prussian troops, was an unrelenting worry. The chastisement of Denmark was held up to all the Germanic states accessible from the sea as a proof of what might happen to allies who looked in the wrong direction. How could they tell that England and Holland, with their wealth and their command of the Baltic waters, would not offer compulsive inducements to the Swedish fire-eater, and land his army at any point upon the exposed sea-coast? Such were the bearings and posture of the Northern War in the period at which our story has arrived.

But the years 1702 and 1703 also saw new countries and new forces drawn into the War of the Spanish Succession. The reverberations of the main quarrel roused a giddy excitement in all minds, and everywhere rulers and races with ambitions to satisfy or grievances to assert hastened to choose their sides and draw their swords. We have seen the same thing happen in our own time. Indeed, the parallel is curiously exact. Each of the chief combatants reached out for small allies, or sought to raise or foment revolts in the domains of the enemy. Bavaria and Savoy were thrown by their sovereigns or by their circumstances into the general war on opposite sides in the early eighteenth, just as Roumania and Bulgaria were caught up in the twentieth century. Moreover, the consequences, both to these small Powers arriving belated in the arena and to the principals in the quarrel, were very much alike in the two periods. The newcomers were set upon with fury by the champions they had affronted. The German treatment of Roumania in 1917 is but a repetition of the punishment inflicted by the allies upon Bavaria in 1704. The vicissitudes of Savoy may be set against those of modern Bulgaria. In both cases the decisive struggle was transferred for a while to new theatres and more distant battlefields.

In this chapter we have to tell how the cause of the Two Crowns

[1] Von Noorden, ii, 38.

was helped by the treason of Bavaria and the Hungarian revolt; how Anglo-Dutch policy endeavoured to succour the rebellion against Louis in the Cevennes; and how Savoy and Portugal were gained to the allies. We shall also show the often decisive relations which these subsidiary disturbances bore to the main event.

The Treason of Bavaria

While the fortresses on the Meuse were falling one by one to Marlborough's arms in 1702, a new spring of events began to flow to Bavaria which was ultimately to be decisive upon Marlborough's career and upon the future of Europe. Max Emmanuel, the Elector of Bavaria, was a politician without scruple and with a thirst for adventure. In 1701, before the fighting became general, he was in close intrigue with France, and a treaty was signed whereby he received a monthly subsidy of a hundred thousand thalers[1] in order to build up a Bavarian army, which finally amounted to twenty-one thousand men. Thus in 1702 he was in a position of remarkable strength among the states of the Empire. In March he went a step farther and opened by a roundabout channel his designs to Louis XIV. His lengthy letter, preserved in the Austrian archives, sets forth as black a scheme of greed and deceit as has ever been committed to paper. He wished, he said, to join the party of the Two Crowns, and was willing to make war not only upon the house of Austria, but upon the neighbouring German princes. For this he must have the guarantee of France that whatever lands he conquered, "to which he had no right," should be assigned to him in the final peace, and that no such peace would be made by the Two Crowns which did not provide for this. The continuance of the military subsidy was also imperative. King Louis had not been wholly satisfied with his previous attitude, and had allowed the instalments to fall into arrear in order to make him define his intentions.

The Elector proceeded to explain how he might be most serviceable. If he entered openly into the campaign provision would be made by the Grand Alliance to meet his attack; but if he remained quiet and powerful until all the troops on both sides were engaged, and then chose the best moment for throwing his weight by surprise into the scale, he would produce the greatest effect in his power. For this purpose he proposed to lull the Emperor into a false state

[1] The thaler—or dollar, as it is now called—exchanged with the pound sterling around 4.86$.

of security by bargaining with him for the use of the new Bavarian Army, and then suddenly, when he had gained his full confidence and no precautions had been taken against him, he would strike what he devoutly prayed might be a deadly blow. His first act would be to seize by treachery in full peace the free city and fortress of Ulm, on the Danube. As the only other first-class fortress between Ulm and Passau was his own city of Ingolstadt a great waterway, he pointed out, would be opened into the vitals of the Empire and the Austrian Hereditary Lands, and even Vienna itself would soon be exposed. If, however, he took this plunge he must be assured that French forces up to 40 battalions and 60 squadrons would be sent him from the Rhine according to his needs. He felt, he concluded, he would never have such a chance again in all his life, and mentioned that he could hardly sleep for thinking about it.

All this seemed very good to the Great King. Every promise that Max Emmanuel desired was given, and the punctual flow of the military subsidies was resumed. The Elector thereupon, with many expressions of love and loyalty, began to negotiate with the Emperor for the hire of his troops. He offered to declare war upon France for a subsidy larger than that he had hitherto received from Louis, and to send an important part of his army to fight in Italy, provided that he himself were given the command of all the Imperial troops there. The Emperor and his Court were attracted by the proposal. They commended it to the Maritime Powers, and asked for their assent and their money. There was no difficulty about the money; nor in Holland was any objection taken against Max Emmanuel holding the Italian command. But when Wratislaw earnestly pressed complete acceptance upon England he met with an obstinate resistance on the question of command. Prince Eugene's brilliant campaign of 1701 and his recent hard-fought action at Luzzara had already made him famous and popular in London. Marlborough had conceived an instinctive admiration and liking for him. These views were shared by the Queen and Godolphin, and also by Nottingham, the Secretary of State. The idea of superseding Prince Eugene, then the greatest captain of the age, in the full tide of his success, by an unproven royalty, was deemed both foolish and ungrateful. The Secretary of State confronted Wratislaw with a letter in the Queen's own hand in which she declared she could not be a party to the displacement of Prince Eugene. Nottingham inquired why the Elector should not serve under Prince Eugene. No objection could be taken by England to that, nor to the provision of

the money. But Wratislaw observed that the precedence of an Electoral Prince over a Marshal of the Empire was so decisive that it could not even be questioned. The divergence between Dutch and English policy had now to be discussed between the Governments.

Meanwhile it was already September. All the armies were fully engaged in every theatre. The Imperial forces in Germany were involved in the siege of Landau, which seemed to be in extremities. The moment for which Max Emmanuel had plotted had come. On September 9, 1702, forty or fifty Bavarian officers, disguised as peasants bringing vegetables to the market-gate of Ulm, suddenly overpowered the sentries, and after a short struggle in which their leader was killed admitted the Bavarian troops, who were close behind them, into the defenceless city. The mayor and corporation surrendered to treacherous violence, having only time to send a messenger for help. The Elector had awaited the result of his master-stroke at a neighbouring castle, and as soon as the courier with the news clattered into the courtyard informed his councillors and officers that Ulm was his, and that he was at war with the Emperor. The officers applauded; the Ministers were dumbfounded; and subsequently the nobility and clergy of the whole of Bavaria testified their grief and alarm at what they regarded as almost an act of sacrilege against the Holy Roman Empire. But the deed was done, and Max Emmanuel stood at the head of an intact, well-equipped, and comparatively powerful army.

The news of the defection of Bavaria carried consternation both to London and to The Hague. The discomfiture of Wratislaw, who almost the day before had been pressing the claims of the Elector to oust Prince Eugene in Italy, can be imagined. Heinsius also felt that his judgment had been at fault. In both countries the injury to the Empire and to the cause of the Alliance was understood. But what was there to do? A fortunate coincidence, however, mitigated the first effects of this malign event. Max Emmanuel had miscalculated the resisting powers of Landau. Had he struck a fortnight earlier, or had Landau resisted a fortnight longer, it is probable that the Imperial army would have been forced to abandon the siege. But when the Elector seized Ulm on the 9th Landau had already 'beaten the chamade' on the 8th.

What followed in Bavaria may be shortly related. The Elector sent a message to Marshal Catinat on the Rhine proposing a junction of their forces at Hüningen. But the Imperial Minister in Switzerland, having heard of the treason, armed his servants and caught the

messenger and several other couriers with papers exposing not only Max Emmanuel's immediate plan but his further designs. Neither the Elector nor Catinat received their messages, and each deemed himself for some time betrayed by the other. No junction was effected between the French and Bavarian forces, and the Elector to gain time sought to protect himself from military chastisement by endeavouring to resume relations with Vienna. Meanwhile in October Prince Louis, the Margrave of Baden, marched up the Rhine from Landau and engaged Villars, who had replaced Catinat, in a serious action at Friedlingen. Each side had about sixteen thousand men. Both fell back in disorder and even panic; and both claimed the victory. Villars sent a dispatch to Versailles so glowing that he received his marshal's baton forthwith. But when it was seen that he had been glad to recross the Rhine, and that no junction of his troops with the Elector seemed likely, it was felt at the French Court that his promotion was precipitate and their *Te Deums* premature. The year therefore closed with the Elector still separated from the French, and apparently seeking to make his peace with the Emperor. The Dutch, stung by having been deceived, were scornful of these negotiations. But Marlborough and Godolphin seemed impressed with the importance of dealing with Bavaria by force or treaty. Neither was possible in 1702. The grave change which had been produced in the strategic position did not impose itself as yet upon either side in an acute form.

The Hungarian Revolt

During the centuries when the Turks preyed upon Central Europe Hungary and Transylvania became a borderland torn by repeated invasions, and frayed with ceaseless strife. The Magyar nobility and squires preserved a feudal character, and in their desperate need welcomed every form of German aid, even at the price of Imperial control. But when the victories of Prince Eugene and the Peace of Carlowitz at the end of the seventeenth century removed, as it seemed finally, the Ottoman pressure, a new view was taken of their respective rights and duties by the two races which had hitherto been content to fight side by side. The House of Austria conceived itself entitled to treat Hungary as rescued or conquered territory, and to assert Imperial sovereignty in its most uncompromising form. The elective monarchy of Hungary became hereditary in the person of the Emperor. A vigorous policy was

launched against dyarchy and dualism in all their manifestations A bureaucracy of German-born and German-speaking officials overspread the land. The old Hungarian Estates were to be reduced to impotence. A contribution of one-third of the expenses of the Austrian Army was permanently imposed upon Hungary without consultation with its representatives, and without the traditional immunity from taxation which the Magyar nobility and minor military chieftains had enjoyed during the troublous ages. Vienna would become the sole and undisputed centre of the Empire, and Hungary an Austrian administrative province governed and taxed in strict uniformity with the other Hereditary Lands.

It is easy to see why the struggle between these Imperial claims and the national pride and interest of the Magyars was fierce and unending. Almost every impulse which has ever roused revolt was now at work in its sharpest form. The nobles had hitherto dreaded the peasantry and the brigand chiefs whom generations of warfare had produced. All came together, and the full strength of the Hungarian nation ranged itself against the Empire at a time when that already decrepit body was engaged in a grievous war with the first of military Powers. Franz Rakoczy, sprung from a famous Transylvanian family, had fled with a price on his head to Poland from Imperial vengeance. He now became the accepted leader of the rebellion. Strengthened by French money and the support of Louis XIV, he returned to Budapest, and in 1703 was at the head no longer of small bands of partisans, but of armies which sometimes assembled twenty thousand strong, behind which the ancient Constitution of Hungary stood, and administrations both national and local were soon taking shape and reality.

It is needless here to describe the cruel guerrilla or even war which followed; still less the tortuous negotiations by which it was continually accompanied. Suffice it that during the whole period with which we are concerned the Imperial Court alternated between indecisive combat and insincere caresses, and changed from severity to concessions according to the fortunes of the general war; while Rakoczy for his part revealed a strong personal ambition to become the hereditary ruler at least of Transylvania, and used the impulses of Hungarian freedom largely for that purpose. But the reactions upon the Grand Alliance play a well-marked part in our tale. The Sea Powers, on whom the weight and even more the cost of the war fell so heavily, were by this time thoroughly dissatisfied with the exertions of the Empire against France. Primarily, they observed,

the quarrel lay between the Emperor and Louis XIV. None of the allies stood to gain from victory prizes comparable to those which would fall to the house of Hapsburg. Yet this sovereign seemed helpless in his own cause. Instead of throwing his weight into the main struggle against the common enemy, he preferred, it seemed, to persecute his subjects whom misgovernment had driven into revolt. The Court at Vienna clamoured ceaselessly for subsidies and for troops. But the Maritime Powers complained that if these were sent it would only by so much relax the Empire's efforts against France, and enable the strength of the Imperial forces to be thrown against the Hungarian insurgents.

Moreover, there was in both England and Holland a lively sympathy for these same insurgents. In Parliament the Whigs descanted upon freedom and the rights of peoples, while Tories dwelt upon the shortcomings of Continental allies. In the Dutch Republic the idea of establishing similar federal institutions in Hungary naturally found support. Neither the English treatment of Ireland nor that which the States-General were soon afterwards to mete out to Belgium disturbed the complacency of their leaders' judgments about Hungary. The sympathies of the Maritime Powers for the Hungarian rebels strained the structure of the Grand Alliance. The Imperial Court resented the interference of England and Holland in the affairs of the Hapsburg monarchy, and not less the subversive doctrines which these republican or Parliamentary countries fostered. On the other hand, in the desperate straits to which the Empire was already reduced the money and arms of the Sea Powers were indispensable. Continuous friction resulted. No one charged with the duty of pressing for the mediation of the Maritime Powers between the Emperor and his rebellious subjects could have avoided giving offence at Vienna. The English Ambassador, George Stepney, was Whig-minded. This added an extra sting to his negotiations on behalf of the Hungarians. By the end of 1703 he was a most unpopular figure at the Imperial Court. A strong personal antipathy had grown between him and Wratislaw. Only increasing common danger kept ill-assorted allies together, and preserved Stepney in the discharge of his thankless though congenial duties.

The Rising in the Cevennes

The Huguenot peasantry of the Cevennes, long harried by the persecutions of Louis XIV, had broken into open revolt in 1702.

Here was a furious war of religion as an enclave of the main struggle for power. Mysticism, murder, and retributory massacre spread through all that hard mountainous region between the Rhone and the Garonne. A warfare as pitiless as that of La Vendée a century later, and similar to it in many features, began to gnaw internally the strength of France. The Camisards, so called from the white shirts which were their only and easily doffed uniform, performed prodigies of daring and fanaticism against the regular troops of the Great King. Their struggles and torments deeply stirred the Protestant passions of the Sea Powers. To give these martyr-peasants succour in their revolt against Popery and slavery was a dear desire spreading far beyond the lobbies of Parliaments or the tents of commanding generals.

But how to reach them in the depths of France? The Anglo-Dutch fleets were already able to make summer cruises in the Mediterranean, and in 1703 efforts were made to establish contact with the rebellion in the Cevennes. Two English ships under Sir Cloudesley Shovell, with money, arms, and agents, hung off the French southern ports. But so far every endeavour to pierce the land barrier had failed. Sympathy for the Camisards and the evident advantage of sustaining their resistance increased the desire of the allies to regain the Duke of Savoy.

The Reconciliation with Savoy

In the conflict between the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs, between France and the Empire, the Duchy of Savoy-Piedmont was cursed or blessed by the highest form of strategic importance. This small state, with its compact and loyal army, was the guardian of the Alpine passes. It rested with its rulers, the Dukes of Savoy, to decide upon occasion whether Austrian armies should invade the southern provinces of France, or French armies should deploy on the slopes of Piedmont for an advance into Northern Italy. The politics of the house of Savoy during the whole period of the wars of William and of Marlborough against Louis XIV consisted in selling the passes and reselling them to the highest bidder who was likely to honour his bond. Victor Amadeus carried this dangerous marketing to a high perfection. It was the deliberate policy of his house and Government to change sides from time to time for the sake of safety or profit. The defection of Savoy from King William's confederacy had been the prelude to the Peace of Ryswick. Victor

Amadeus made marriages of high consequence with the family of Louis XIV. His elder daughter had married the Duke of Burgundy: the younger Princess of Savoy married the Duke of Anjou. Thus in 1701 Victor Amadeus was father-in-law both of the heir to the French throne and of Philip V, the accepted sovereign of the Empire of Spain. He was, in fact, precariously astride not only of the passes of the Alps, but of the party of the Two Crowns.

Nevertheless his situation was uncomfortable. William, implacable over his desertion, had brushed him out of all consideration for the English throne, to which he had a contingent claim. The French marshals, although bound to respect a prince so well connected, were rough and contemptuous of the little state France had seduced. Even at the renewal of the general war the Duke and his advisers were filled with resentment against the patronizing arrogance of France. The brilliant campaign of Eugene in Venetia and Lombardy in 1701, the unexpected solidarity of England and Holland after the death of King William, the vigour, howsoever hampered, of Marlborough's operations in Flanders in 1702, caused the Duke of Savoy and his councillors to discuss among themselves whether it would not pay them to change sides again. The Roman Empire was Holy. The Sea Powers were not only militant but rich. Large subsidies were being paid to German princes far less cardinally set upon the map. Events which we have described made, as they occurred, a very deep impression upon the Court at Turin. Profound and perilous confabulations were held during the whole of 1702.

The first conclusion which Victor Amadeus reached was that he could raise his price against the Two Crowns considerably. The marriage-ties which his children had contracted seemed to be no brake upon the politics of Savoy-Piedmont. Accordingly he began to press both Paris and Madrid for morsels of the Spanish Empire; his appetites were directed towards securing the assistance of France in his succession to Mantuan Montferrat, and the assent of Madrid to his acquisition of Milan. These crude desires and all the possibilities arising from their disappointment became well known to both French and allied diplomacy during that year. But, whether from distrust or disdain, or from inherent difficulty, Victor Amadeus's demands were ignored in the capitals of the Two Crowns. We need not complicate our story by intricate details, but by the end of 1702 it was realized in the secret circles of Europe that Savoy had asked her friends for more and had been refused—and even spurned.

Victor Amadeus was soon deep in intrigues with the allies. Stepney at Vienna worked with the Imperial diplomats to bring him over. The transaction was dangerous, because a strong French army under Vendôme was actually in the Duchy, intermingled with the Piedmontese troops, and in control of many key-points. Vendôme, great-grandson of Henri IV, Marshal of France, and a fine soldier to boot, but with unpleasant personal habits, rode rough-shod over the occupied territory. The Piedmontese became hostile to the French troops; the negotiations of the Court of Turin with Vienna, with The Hague, and with St James's continued, and the French were soon suspicious of what was afoot.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1703 the relations between Savoy-Piedmont and France became increasingly strained. In July Vendôme convinced himself that Victor Amadeus was obtaining military information for the allies through his vivacious daughter, the Duchess of Burgundy. He sought authority from Versailles to disarm the Piedmontese Army and garrison the more important fortresses whenever he should judge it necessary. Plenary powers were given him.

This delicate situation was brought to a head by an astonishing breakdown in English diplomacy which was held to reflect seriously upon Nottingham as Secretary of State. In the secret councils at Turin there were two parties, pro-Austrian and pro-French. Victor Amadeus had, of course, rigidly excluded the Comte de la Tour, the advocate of France, from his underground negotiations with the enemy. But in August 1703 Richard Hill, the former tutor of Rochester's eldest son, whom Nottingham had publicly appointed Envoy Extraordinary to the Duke of Savoy—a job in itself and a hardy procedure towards one who was still an enemy prince—and Aglionby, the English agent in Switzerland, addressed themselves to la Tour as if he were in their secrets and on their side. Consternation swept Vienna and Turin when this indiscretion became known. Nottingham and his colleague Hedges learned too late from Stepney the true state of affairs. "You will see," wrote Stepney to Hill on October 10, after the disclosure, "that the little Count de la Tour is not the man you took him for; and it were to be wished . . . this Court might have been consulted how far such application had been seasonable. . . ."

The consequences were serious. On September 29 Vendôme arrested a number of Piedmontese generals, disarmed such of the Duke's troops as were in his immediate power, and demanded the

surrender of fortresses. "Never, perhaps," wrote Stepney to Hill, "was any affair transacted from the beginning to the end with so much negligence and indiscretion as this had been." However, the violence of Vendôme produced an unforeseeable reaction. Up till this stage Victor Amadeus was still balancing. He had not yet made his treaty with the allies. His exorbitance and procrastination had driven the Imperial agent at his Court almost to despair. Victor Amadeus was a proud and courageous turncoat. While weaving his webs of intrigue in the interests of his small country he never forgot that he was a soldier with a sword at his side. Indeed, he was capable of fighting with the utmost personal valour in the forefront of a battle which his policy required him to lose. He was smitten by Vendôme's high-handed action into an indignation in which an uneasy conscience played its part. Thereupon he threw himself into the arms of the allies. He turned to them for help "like a man whose house is burning over his head." The allies did not try to exploit his weakness. If he had still been in possession of an undiminished force and at the height of success, he could have secured no better treaty than was ultimately made. On November 8 the alliance between Savoy and the Empire was concluded. The Duke was promised an Imperial army of twenty thousand men; the upkeep of his own army was to be arranged with the Sea Powers. His ambitions about Mantua and Milan would be gratified in allied victory, and he could look to further conquests in the south of France should the war flow prosperously into those regions. There were no illusions about these transactions in Vienna. Stepney wrote on November 7, "It is certain our new ally has no manner of bowels or other principles and cares for nothing on God's earth but his own dear self." This severe judgment paid too little consideration to the trials and needs of a small country between the hammer and the anvil of rival empires engaged in ruthless quarrel.

The wrath of the great combatants was forthwith focused upon the petty traitor states. The same hatred which the allies and the Empire felt for the Elector of Bavaria was now concentrated by France upon the Duke of Savoy. The desire to make examples of these recreants lent new possibilities to strategy. Moreover, each side felt bound to do its best for its own new adherent. Louis XIV conceived his honour closely engaged in sustaining Max Emmanuel and in wreaking vengeance upon Victor Amadeus. These sentiments

stirred the allies with the same degree of bitterness in the reverse form, and cast their shadows forward upon the year 1704.

The treason of Bavaria had torn the entrails out of the Empire. The desertion of Savoy threatened to inflict an almost equal injury upon France. Just when in the summer of 1703, the party of the Two Crowns believed they were masters of all Italy, the apparition of Savoy-Piedmont in the ranks of their enemies created a new, costly, dangerous front, second in importance only to Flanders itself. Nor need the evil stop at the frontiers of Savoy. If the Camisards' revolt continued, and if a serious invasion of France, sustained by the Empire and the efforts of the Sea Powers, could be launched from Savoy, a tremendous penetration of France might result.

The swift and exemplary chastisement of Victor Amadeus became an important aim of France. Hotfoot upon the news of the Savoy treaty, Marshal de Tesse overran the dukedom with a numerous army, and a converging campaign against Piedmont under Vendôme and his brother the Grand Prior was prepared for 1704. From all sides—across Savoy, from Lombardy, and from the Milanese—the avenging armies would move towards Turin. It was confidently believed in Paris that the coming year would bring his reward to the Elector of Bavaria and his ruin to the Duke of Savoy. But, as we shall see, destiny chose other channels.

The Portuguese Alliance

Hitherto in the War of the Spanish Succession no attempt had been made by the allies to challenge the French usurper on the soil of Spain. This was impossible without a base in the peninsula. All through 1702 the English Cabinet sought to wean Portugal from its warm friendship with France. Powerful factors were upon their side. Portugal had suffered cruelly as a neutral from the blockade of the Sea Powers, which intercepted lawful trade upon the high seas, and choked the still more lucrative smuggling trade in English manufactures at its source. Pedro II had need to be a cautious king. His pompous Court, always threatened by palace revolutions and seething with the cabals of favourites and the disputes of noble would-be place-holders, rested upon a horde of provincial and colonial officials, alike lazy and corrupt, beneath all of which heaved and muttered the extremely nasty Lisbon mob. Here was no sure foundation for a throne or an audacious policy. The King sought ample guarantees.

He saw with comfort the French ships cowering in Toulon before the English fleets. He observed the riotous command of the oceans which the allies exercised. He dreaded the effect upon the royal finances and the national temper of a quarrel with England. Accordingly he agreed in May 1703 to break with the Two Crowns, and throw in the luck of Portugal with the cause of the Sea Powers.

His conditions were exacting. The allies must advance through Portugal to the invasion of Spain, thus shielding his country from the wrath of France. He would provide 28,000 Portuguese soldiers, of which 13,000 would be at their expense. They must add 12,000 English and Dutch troops. All must be under his royal command. Beyond all, the allies must directly challenge the sovereignty of Philip V by the personal presence in the invading army of the rival claimant, the Archduke Charles; and parts of Estremadura and Galicia, including the fortress of Badajoz, were to be taken from Spain to reward the new ally. These last requirements were the hardest of all to meet. The Emperor Leopold shrank from the departure of his beloved younger son to be cast upon a distant shore in a dubious adventure sustained by the arms of heretics. But far more grievous were the consequences upon the general war. The treaties of the Grand Alliance were based essentially upon the idea of partition. They had never presumed to claim for the Imperial candidate the whole of Spain. The addition of the clause in the treaty with Portugal that there should be no peace without Philip V surrendering Spain involved an immense enlargement of the war-aims of the Alliance and an almost indefinite prolongation of the struggle.

For this the English Cabinet and Nottingham, the Tory Secretary of State, were directly responsible. The Hapsburgs could not, of course, object to so full a recognition of their claims. Although at Vienna there were fierce disputes over the respective rights of Joseph, King of the Romans, and the Archduke Charles, the Emperor Leopold himself did his part by renouncing all rights to the Spanish throne. The Dutch were profoundly disturbed. Their opposition long prevented the incorporation of the additional clause of the Portuguese treaty in the general engagements of the Grand Alliance. Heinsius said to Stanhope that the article "that no peace shall be made till the House of Austria be in possession of the whole monarchy of Spain" was "of hard digestion."[1] The Dutch misgivings were to be only too well justified by the event. However, the will of London

[1] Stanhope to Hedges, September 11, 1703; S.P., 84/226, f. 30.

prevailed. England and Holland had the ships, the men, and the money, and England pulled all the strings. Accordingly the die was cast. Henceforth the war would be lighted up throughout the peninsula, and the French Philip V and the Austrian Charles III must themselves wrestle for the land and crown of Spain. Henceforth the allies, besides humbling Louis XIV, had to conquer the Spanish people.

The English Cabinet had made for themselves a very rosy picture of the Spanish-Portuguese scene. To their fancy the Portuguese were still the ardent guerrilla fighters who had liberated their country from the Spanish yoke in the previous generation. They looked to see the fiery shepherds and wine-growers of the highlands and lowlands of Portugal leap forward on their behalf in their ancient valour. But these doughty folk did not respond to English expectations. They liked the commercial treaty, but they did not want the war which was its price. It was without the slightest national enthusiasm that the Portuguese allowed themselves to be drawn into the European struggle. Queen Anne's Government overrated the martial efforts of the Portuguese: they misjudged the temper of the Spaniards. They had looked for hot struggles on the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Po, but they could not believe that this French intruder so recently thrust by his grandfather into the sovereignty of Spain could have taken any root in that soil. They expected that a patriotic Portuguese army, sustained by a strong nucleus of the best troops in Europe, would march swiftly forward from Lisbon to Madrid, and that the Spaniards would welcome King Charles III as their deliverer and rightful prince. Indeed, the overbearing behaviour and methods of the French Ambassador, Grammont, and the French generals, who treated Spain, like Savoy, as if it were a conquered province of France, had already aroused a keen resentment among the Castilian nobility.

But against these flowed the current of Spanish hatred against the revolted vassal state which had wrested its independence from the motherland. The Spanish people recognized the event as a Portuguese invasion. Nor were their prejudices removed by the tales which reached them of the exploits of the English soldiery during the attack upon Cadiz. The pillage of churches, the rape of nuns, and later the capture of the treasure at Vigo and the insulting of the Spanish coasts, roused the nation. To them the French King stood for the unity of a world-wide empire, and the defence of the national soil against freebooters. He was the man in possession.

The allies and their candidate were invaders who in cold blood had proclaimed the partition of the Spanish dominions, and were now marching to the subjugation of Spain itself. Thus, while the Portuguese were lukewarm, the Spaniards, infuriated, rallied to Philip V, and he became their national champion in an hour when their old glories and immediate safety seemed at stake. When these passions were armed by the sharp sword of the Duke of Berwick, now a Marshal of France, the Spanish theatre became the scene of a series of clamant disasters to the allied cause which not even the thunders of Marlborough's victories elsewhere could drown.

We shall not anticipate the course of the Spanish campaigns. Their episodes each year must be judged in relation to the general war, but we must discern how Marlborough stood towards this immense widening of the conflict. It is certain that he did not resist it. He watched the Spanish theatre with the keenest interest. He yielded with hardly a grumble the troops which the London Cabinet sent for the expedition to Portugal. Although these troops were withdrawn somewhat unceremoniously from his command by Nottingham as Secretary of State, and he was thereby exposed to the violent protests of the Dutch, he took great trouble to pick good regiments, and aided—within limits—the enterprise as if it were his own. He concurred in the choice of the commanders, and was content to be weakened in the main sphere of operations. There is no doubt that individually he never looked upon the Spanish war as anything more than a diversion of French energies. His own eyes were constantly fixed upon the control of the Mediterranean and upon the Italian front. To have a good fortified harbour and naval base upon the coast of Spain, to pen the French fleet in Toulon, to take Toulon, to carry the war into France from the south, to sustain Eugene and the Imperial troops from the sea—these, apart from his own task of coping with the strongest French army, were his aims. For the rest, the war in Spain, if kept within a certain scale, would tend to the dispersion of the French forces perhaps as much as those of the allies; and it was, finally, a concession to the Tory Party's views upon the art of war. Such a concession may have been inevitable: we cannot measure the forces at work within the English Cabinet and Parliament. That there was a great urge towards the Spanish theatre is evident. Indeed, we shall presently see Marlborough compelled to resist proposals to carry the bulk of the Queen's troops from Flanders to the peninsula. We shall see him forced to acquiesce for years in a lamentable drain of troops

and money from his own forces to regions where nothing decisive could be gained. It did not prevent him from conducting his own operations successfully, but nevertheless it weakened his right arm.

He never explained his thoughts except in his letters at the moment, and, so far as we know, never indulged in retrospect of any kind. But there is a story about him at the end of his life which seems to reveal his inmost mind. In 1716 there was an alarm of French invasion. The Cabinet sent two Ministers to Blenheim to ask the advice of the Captain-General who had already undergone his first stroke, was partly paralysed, and spoke only with the greatest difficulty. The Ministers carried back from their interview only one recorded remark: "Keep the army together: don't divide it."

Chapter Ten

"THE GREAT DESIGN"

1703—SUMMER

MARLBOROUGH arrived at The Hague on March 17 and began forthwith to draw his forces into the field. This year he could concentrate the "grand army" eighty miles south of Nimwegen, around Maestricht. He reviewed his troops and garrisons, beginning with the English at Breda, and inspected all the fortresses of the Meuse from Venloo up to Maestricht. While he marshalled the troops and set all things moving with the utmost activity, he argued with the Dutch about the plan of campaign. The evident intentions of Louis XIV to make his main effort against the Empire, and to stand on the defensive against the Anglo-Dutch armies, could be countered either by sending large reinforcements to the Moselle or the Upper Rhine, or by decisive action in Flanders. The Prussian King had offered an extra corps of eighteen thousand men for service in the northern theatre, provided that it served as an independent command. Marlborough would have welcomed this, but the States-General, fearing political designs, rejected the powerful aid. There remained the resource of a battle gained among the fortresses, the consequences of which would instantly make Flanders and Brabant the decisive theatre. But Marlborough knew already too well that the Dutch Government and command would never commit themselves to this in cold blood. They might be drawn into a great decision of arms by the force of events, but they would not agree to it beforehand. He did not press them, therefore, to allow him to seek the enemy in the field under the best conditions. Within the limits and in the theatre to which he was restricted there were, however, opportunities of producing dominating results. For this purpose he had set his heart on the capture of Ostend and Antwerp. Ostend would give him a new direct communication with England: Antwerp was not only the northern keystone of the French lines, but, more important still, controlled the whole waterway system of the Scheldt, the Lys, and the canals, which with the Meuse formed the

principal lines of advance through the fortress zone. These two great trading centres, if won, would open up Belgium to the commerce of the allies. The fall of the city and seaport of Antwerp would offset the successes which the French must certainly gather elsewhere, and it seemed almost certain that they would fight a battle in its defence. Moreover, the Tory Party would approve a campaign in which the Navy would play an important part, directed against the coast ports and with promising commercial reactions. It was not only good strategy, but good politics.

The States-General, like Louis XIV, were not averse from sieges. Sieges seemed the safest way of making war; but they looked in the opposite direction. The fortress of Bonn, midway between Cologne and Coblenz, was now the sole barrier to the navigation of the Rhine for three hundred miles from its mouth to Philippsburg. The capture of Bonn would seem to succour the Empire, with which it opened a sure communication. This enterprise had been prepared during the winter, and the Dutch had undertaken to have all in readiness before the end of March.

Marlborough deferred to the Dutch opinion on the understanding that the siege of Bonn should be begun early, pressed with extreme vigour, and disposed of in the early stages of the campaign. Ostend and Antwerp could follow later, if no time were lost. Leaving Overkirk between Maestricht and Liége to guard the line of the Meuse, he marched in the middle of April to the Rhine, forming with the Prussian, Hessian, and Hanoverian troops an army of 40 battalions and 60 squadrons for the siege of Bonn. So backward were the preparations that Cohorn, the expert on whom the Dutch were relying, at the last moment advised that the siege of Bonn should be put off till the autumn. But Marlborough would have none of this. His letters had best tell their own tale.

Marlborough to Godolphin

MAESTRICHT
April 16, 1703

*I find by Lady Marl. that you were gone to Newmarket, where I hope you will have good luck. Since my last I have been at Liége, where I saw the E[arl] of Ailesbury, but there was so much company that I had not time to speak to him, so that he has sent his steward to me here to let me see that his family would be undone if he had not leave to come for [back to] England. I told him the Queen's affairs would suffer if she should give him leave at this time. His steward is going to England, and will wait upon you, with the reasons that

make him hope that he may obtain leave for the next term only, in which time he says he may settle all the affairs of his family with his son. I can't tell whether this thing be only a pretence, and if real whether it may be reasonable for the Queen to do it as matters now are; but I promised the steward that I would let you know what his request was. I am assured here that my Lord Ailesbury has played the fool and changed his Religion.

Marlborough to Godolphin

COLOGNE
April 20, 1703

★Since my arrival here yesterday I have had a good deal of spleen, for instead of finding everything ready there is none of the boats with the ammunition and cannon yet come, so that Monsr Cohorn had proposed to me to let the siege alone till the end of the year. You know in my opinion I was never fond of this siege; but it has now made so much noise that I think it would be scandalous to avoid the making it now, so that I have given the orders for the investing of it next Wednesday, in the hopes that most things will be come by that time.

I have this day seen a very great procession, and the thought how pleased poor Lord Churchill would have been with such a sight has added very much to my uneasiness. Since it has pleased God to take him, I do wish from my soul I would think less of him. The news is so ill from Germany that I am afraid we shall make a very scurvy end of this campaign, especially if we should be so unhappy as to meet with great difficulty in this siege.

It is significant that, while Marlborough opens his heart about his dead son to Godolphin, he makes no reference to his feelings in telling his wife about the same procession. Evidently he was unwilling to revive Sarah's grief. There were very few things which he overlooked in his care for her.

John to Sarah

COLOGNE
April 20, 1703

★I came to this place last Night, and find I must stay here longer than I intended; for we want so many things here, that I shall not be able to invest the place before Tuesday. This day is a very great holiday in this place. I have seen a procession, in which there was several thousands of clergymen. I have got a very good house for my quarters. I wish I could have you with me, and you could go back without trouble; for I believe 'twill be a month before the siege is done. I own to you, that upon several accounts, I have at this time the spleen. For I see plainly that I can never be happy till I am with you, and do not

trouble myself with any business: For I think every ill news has so great an effect upon my temper, that, if I continue serving, I shall be very miserable. *Tho' I must own at the same time, I have all the obligations imaginable to the Dutch; for they let me command, and do more than if I was their own General. . . .*

Marlborough to Godolphin

COLOGNE
April 24

Our news from Germany continues to be very ill, which gives us very melancholy thoughts on this side. The town of Bonn should have been attacked before now, but that we have been disappointed in everything. However, all the troops will be there to-morrow. I go from hence at the same time, and shall press the siege all that in me lies, for I shall be very uneasy till I am with the great army, hoping we may have time to do what is at my heart. After which we shall be the better able to defend ourselves against the French, when they shall think fit to be strong.[1]

Marlborough to Godolphin

CAMP BEFORE BONN
April 27, 1703

*. . . As we have no cannon yet come, we are very quiet, and the French are civil, for they have not fired above five or six cannon as yet. We shall begin to-morrow to make our bridges over the Rhine, for the fort on the other side is what Monsr Cohorn intends to attack first. The name of Cohorn frightens all the ladies of Bonn, which has given me an occasion of obliging them; for I have refused no one a pass to go to Cologne, amongst which are all the Nuns of a Monastery. . . .

John to Sarah

CAMP BEFORE BONN
May 1, 1703

If you had not positively desired that I would always burn your letters, I should have been very glad to have kept your dear letter of the 9th, it was so very kind, and particularly so upon the subject of our living quietly together, till which happy time comes I am sure I cannot be contented; and then I do flatter myself I should live with as much satisfaction as I am capable of. I wish I could recall twenty years past, I do assure you, for no other reason but that I might in probability have longer time, and be the better able to convince you how truly sensible I am at this time of your kindness, which is the only real comfort of my life [part effaced], and whilst you are kind, besides the many blessings it brings me, I cannot but hope we shall yet have a son, which are my daily prayers.[2]

[1] Coxe i, 241. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 227-228.

Marlborough to Godolphin

CAMP BEFORE BONN
May 4, 1703

*Notwithstanding we have not all our boats with the Artillery, I have prevailed with Monsr Cohorn to open the trenches last night, which we have done with very little loss. We hope that all may be here by the time the Batteries will be ready, which will be by Tuesday next. In 12 days after our cannon fires we hope to be masters of this place, after which I shall lose no time in going to the Army on the Meuse. . . .

The siege of Bonn while the armies were still assembling was a serious undertaking. The obvious counterstroke for the French was Liége. Overkirk with the partially formed main army guarded against this danger, but was himself largely outnumbered meanwhile. Bonn was resolutely defended, and the garrison even sallied out upon their assailants. But Marlborough, commanding in person on the spot, used all his power. The Dutch and Germans who composed his army were stout troops, and the artillery was overwhelming. Never before had been seen such a concentration of cannon and munitions as shattered the defences and, indeed, the town of Bonn. Ninety large mortars, many of them six and eight inches in bore, with as much as thirty rounds a day each, five hundred smaller mortars, and over five hundred guns bombarded the doomed fortress. Its outlying works were broken and stormed in fierce fighting, and when the ramparts of the citadel were no more than one great breach the governor averted the final assault by an appeal for terms.

Meanwhile the two French Marshals, Villeroy and Boufflers, had, as expected, been instructed by the King to recapture Liége as a relief, or at the worst an offset, to the siege of Bonn. They too had made large preparations before the campaign opened, and fifteen thousand workmen and three thousand pioneers, together with the necessary stores, were already gathered behind the main French army around Saint-Trond. They had hoped, indeed, to begin the military year by this attack upon Liége. But Marlborough had provided for its solid defence. They now saw in Overkirk's army which lay between Maestricht and Liége an even more tempting prize. Villeroy had in his hand forty thousand men. Overkirk for some time had but fifteen thousand. Probably because of the stringency of supplies, Marlborough had left the English in their cantonments till April 30. He realized the French menace in sufficient

time, and ten thousand English, well drilled and in the finest fettle, reached Overkirk on May 9, just before they were needed. On the same day Villeroy marched upon him, and his vanguard attacked Tongres, an entrenched post held by a Dutch and a Scottish battalion in Dutch pay. This handful of allied troops resisted for twenty-four hours the onslaught of the French army. They were not only brave, but lucky. Though forced to surrender at discretion, they fell into the hands of Berwick, by whom they were kindly treated. He hastened to assure the Scots that they were his countrymen and that "no man shall do you wrong." The delay gave time for Overkirk to arm and entrench a strong position under the walls of Maestricht and for Marlborough on the 12th to send a further reinforcement. On the 14th the whole French army drew up in order of battle: but after inspecting the defences and bethinking themselves of their general strategic instructions from Versailles the two Marshals decided not to try conclusions, and withdrew, somewhat abashed, towards their own lines.

Marlborough had measured carefully, and, as was proved, justly, all the factors; but we should not underrate his anxieties sixty miles away at Bonn. The fortress was at its last gasp, but meanwhile a disaster at Maestricht would be ruinous. The crisis at Maestricht arose on the 13th. It was not till the 15th that Bonn surrendered. He certainly passed an unpleasant forty-eight hours. This was the kind of situation he had to gauge many times over in his campaigns, and it is astonishing how almost invariably his summing-up of facts, times, and risks was right.

His reflections upon politics at home were set forth in a striking letter written to Sarah while the siege cannon thundered.

CAMP BEFORE BONN
May 13, 1703

*My head did ache so extremely the last post that I was hardly able to write, but I thank God it is now very well. I am very sorry to see by all your letters that the factions continue so extremely angry. As for myself I do assure you, I shall meddle with neither party, having no private ends of my own, but whilst I am in the world endeavour to serve her Majesty the best I can. I know by this method whichever party is uppermost will be angry with me, so that at last the Queen will be obliged by them to let me retire. If she be satisfied with the sincerity of my intentions for her service, I shall then be most happy, for I do flatter myself that I shall behave myself so here that this part of the world will be convinced that I think of nothing but what may be most for the Queen's service, and the good of the

Common Cause. If you approve of what I now say which I promise you I can never be brought to alter from, I should then beg you would endeavour to bring yourself to the same temper; for, my dearest soul, when we come to live together my happiness will depend upon our having but one thought in order to which we must renounce all parties and content ourselves in praying for the Queen's long life, and that France may never have it in their power to impose laws upon England. You will be apt to think by this letter I have the spleen. I do assure you that I am far from it, but it proceeds from the unreasonable partiality I see in both Parties.

John to Sarah

CAMP BEFORE BONN
May 16

★. . . I have been so often disturbed this night with messages out of Town, they having begun to capitulate, that I am very uneasy, the post being ready to go. I am afraid we shall not agree on the capitulation; for they ask much more than we are willing to give; but our affairs go so ill upon the Meuse that we shall lose Liége if this business be not quickly ended. I will keep this open till the last minute to give you a further account.

[Later.] The Governors of the Town have at last agreed to what I have offered. And in one hour I shall be in possession of one of the gates. They are to march out on Friday, but I shall not stay to see them, being resolved to be with the army on the Meuse on Friday from whence you shall be sure to hear from him who loves you with all his soul. My humble duty to the Queen.

He adds, with a characteristic touch of that vile parsimony in small matters which has made him the butt of history:

I hope she will excuse my not putting her to the expense of an express to bring the news of Bonn being taken.

This piece of shabbiness has hitherto escaped attention: but we feel bound to bring it to light. The man must be judged as a whole. Here is a general in the full activity of war, in close contact with the enemy, with difficult allies around him and grave situations to face, who can stoop to save a paltry twenty pounds of public money in the announcing of his own success. It is probable that in Marlborough's armies this kind of thing went on all the time; and it is only now and then that it can be exposed. This ill-assorted combination of the daring commander ready to put all to the push and a cheese-paring Treasury clerk is one of the burdens his defenders have to carry.

Family affairs played a large part in Marlborough's letters from the front, and we must here mention the marriages of his younger children, in which he took so great an interest. His third daughter, Elizabeth, had married early in 1703 the Earl of Bridgewater. His youngest daughter, Mary, had now reached her sixteenth year. She is described by the Archdeacon in the flowery terms usually applied in those days to young ladies of quality. She was, we learn, "exquisitely beautiful, lovely in temper and no less amiable in mind than elegant in person." She was a star to the brave in the Army. Peterborough wished her to marry his son, Lord Mordaunt, whom we shall admire later. Lord Tullibardine also pressed his claims. The reader will remember the gallant Earl of Huntingdon, who while still recovering from his wounds at Kaiserswerth bribed the soldiers to carry him forward at the head of the assault upon Venloo.[1] His letter to the Duke asking for Mary's hand is a fine specimen of eighteenth-century courtship and a worthy tribute coming from so heroic an officer:

> ★In a point on which all the future happiness of my life depends, I thought my concern would be so great, that I should not be able to express myself to your grace by word of mouth. That consideration obliges me to put this paper My Lord into your hands and your thoughts on the perusal of it must determine whether I shall be happy or miserable. My hand trembles at what I am to write, lest my boldness offend those for whom I have the greatest veneration and respect.
>
> I saw yesterday at Court my lady Mary Churchill. I had often heard of her charms but never before thought so many perfections could have enriched one person. From the moment I saw her, I felt what my respect forbids me to mention, and what I cannot describe.
>
> I have since taken the resolution to acquaint your Grace with it, to throw myself at your feet and to beg I may have leave to adore her and endeavour to do what man can do to merit such a treasure.

Fortune shone on none of these extremely eligible young men. Marlborough was determined not to unite his family with that of Peterborough. He wrote from Vorselaer (July 8, 1703):

> ★What you write me concerning 102 [Peterborough]'s son, I think you have done very well in disengaging yourself from that proposal for I have heard that he is what they call a Raskell, which never can make a good husband.

About Huntingdon we have only a laconic sentence in one of the

[1] See p. 597, *n.*

Duke's letters, written very late in the campaign of 1704: "Lord Huntingdon is now with me; he is grown very like his father and mother, which is the worst thing I can say about him."

The choice of John and Sarah inclined from the beginning to Viscount Monthermer, son of the Earl of Montagu, and apparently Mary's views were not discordant. The Duke, however, thought his would-be son-in-law far too young even in those days of early matches to be engaged. In his letter to Sarah from the siege of Bonn he set forth his objections.

May 16

★You desire to know what I would have you answer to 139 [the Earl of Montagu]. You know my mind in that matter, but whatever you do in it, I shall like it; but I am very confident whenever you shall see the young man and Miss Mary together, you will think she is too much a woman for him. However you cannot do better than to advise with the Lord Treasurer what is best to be done, for the proposal is very good if the young man were some years older.

And again:

John to Sarah

HANNEF
June 25, 1703

★I am very glad you are parted so well with 139 for a great many things happen in a year's time, which may make this match more or less reasonable. I can give you no other reason than what I have already against it. However, I find something within me against the match; for should Miss Mary not esteem the young man, it is neither title nor estate that can make her happy; but of this whenever I have the happiness of being with you, we shall have time to talk of it. She being the only child we have to provide for, I should hope with the blessing of God, we ought not to despair of making her happy.

The marriage did not take place until March 1705, and in the following month a dukedom was conferred upon the Earl of Montagu. As in her sister's case, Queen Anne bestowed ten thousand pounds upon the bride.

But John had a personal hope which filled his inner mind. Both he and Sarah longed for another son.

John to Sarah

Friday, June 3

What troubles me in all this time is your telling me that you do not look well. Pray let me have, in every one of your letters, an account

how you do. If it should prove such a sickness as that, I might pity you, but not be sorry for it; it might yet make me have ambition. But if your sickness should really be for want of health, it would render me the unhappiest man living.[1]

I have just now received your letters of the 6th. What you say to me of yourself gave me so much joy, that if any company had been by, when I read your letter, they must have observed a great alteration in me.[2]

John to Sarah

THYS
June 7

I have had yours of the 18th, by which I find you were uneasy at my having the headache. It was your earnest desire obliged me to let you know when I have those little inconveniences of the headache, which are but too natural to me; but if you will not promise me to look upon my sicknesses as you used to do, by knowing I am sick one day, and well another, I must not be punctual in acquainting you when I am uneasy; for I would be just to you, and not make you uneasy. I think you are very happy in having dear lady Mary with you. I should esteem myself so, if she could be sometimes for an hour with me; for the greatest ease I now have, is sometimes sitting for an hour in my chair alone, and thinking of the happiness I may yet have, of living quietly with you, which is the greatest I propose to myself in this world.[3]

Marlborough returned to the Meuse not only with relief at the ending of a crisis, but full of ardour to begin the campaign as he had always wished. With the fall of Bonn and the retreat of the Marshals wide prospects opened, and he unfolded to his generals and to the Dutch Government what he called "the Great Design." The phrase is his own; it recurs in his letters. Such a phrase is unusual in his matter-of-fact style. One of the barriers between history and Marlborough is his self-restraint. We have none of the splendid invocations with which Napoleon led his armies and excited the French nation. There is an endless flow of hard sense. At the worst he is "uneasy," or will "pass his time ill." At the best he will make the enemy "uneasy," or "do some service for the Queen," if only they will "venture." And even these careful understatements were confided only to a select audience in a secrecy which so far as he knew, would never be broken, and was never broken in his lifetime. But now and here we have "the Great Design."

[1] Coxe, i, 228. [2] *Loc. cit.* [3] Coxe, i, 228–229.

Marlborough to Godolphin

MAESTRICHT
May 16

I shall to-morrow send an express to The Hague to see how far they have prepared for what I call the great design; so that we may not lose time in endeavouring to put it in execution. Before I left Bonn, measures were taken for the embarking 20 battalions of foot, if it be possible to get boats enough, and 21 squadrons of horse are to march the nearest way to Bergen-op-Zoom, where they are to join the 20 battalions that go by water. These troops are to take the most advantageous post near Antwerp, after which there will be care taken to join more troops to them. If this design of Antwerp can be brought to perfection, I hope we shall make it very uneasy for them to protect Brussels and the rest of their great towns. I am speaking as if we were masters of Antwerp, *but as yet the two marshals threaten.*[1]

Since this was one of his most cherished and most complicated schemes, and since it miscarried, it is worth some attention. The field armies were almost exactly equal in units, but the allied units were the stronger. The Sea Powers had a superiority of perhaps 73,000 to 67,000 men. But these numbers are uncertain because behind each of the armies were the garrisons. The French, for instance, had no fewer than 63 battalions spread in their fortresses, and the allies a much smaller number. It depended upon the tactics employed to what extent these garrison reserves could be used. The Dutch were eager to undertake another siege, and Marlborough as usual wished to fight a battle. Although this looked more hazardous, it offered really a larger safety. A siege lasted for weeks and a battle only for a few hours. The margin of allied superiority was scarcely sufficient to undertake a siege, because the moment they had divided their armies for that purpose the French could draw freely from all their garrisons. On the other hand, if the initiative were retained and a number of French fortresses simultaneously threatened by an aggressive field army it would be the French who would have to disperse, and Marlborough could strike at their remaining army. Thus a siege was in fact to risk both the initiative and the superiority.

Forced by the Dutch to adopt the least favourable measure, Marlborough had devised a plan which cast siege warfare in an offensive form. To this end he used the waterways at the delta of the Scheldt to move troops and stores quickly and secretly to the northern front while still keeping his main army in the south. The

[1] Coxe, i, 245.

transportation of 20 battalions from Bonn, on the Rhine, to the neighbourhood of Bergen-op-Zoom, near the coast, was favoured by the current of the rivers, which carried the troop-barges forward night and day far quicker than men on the march; while the necessary cavalry rode swiftly across country. Thus the first phase of the operation was the unexpectedly rapid concentration in the north, while all the time the main armies faced each other at the other end of the theatre. All this was easily accomplished.

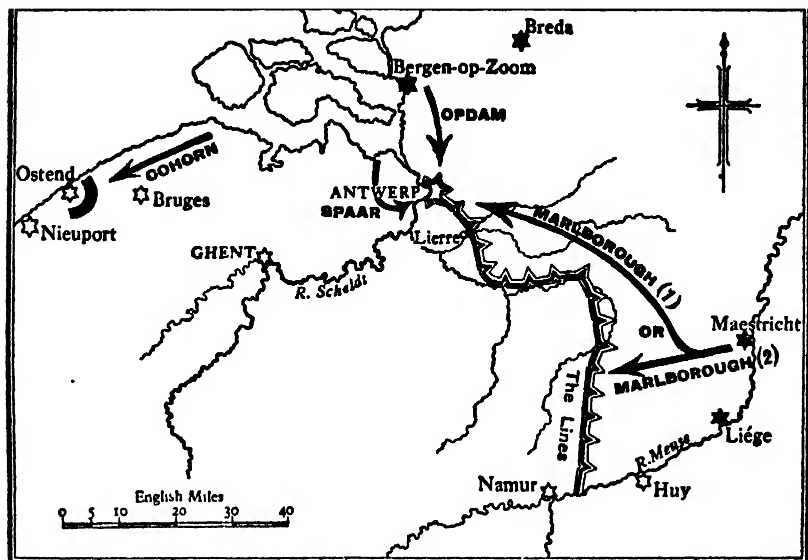
The second phase was to force the dispersion of the French troops in the north. For this Cohorn, assisted by the fleet, was to attack and lay siege to Ostend. Ostend is sixty miles from Antwerp. Bedmar, the Spanish-French commander in Antwerp, would thus be compelled either to divide his forces out of all supporting distance or to lose the highly valued seaport. Marlborough foresaw that nothing less than the fear of losing Ostend would tear him asunder.

The third phase depended upon the timing and upon the strict obedience of the secondary commanders. On zero day Marlborough would move first towards the French main army to pin it and then north-west towards Antwerp. Two days later Cohorn would attack Ostend, and Spaar west of Antwerp. This should produce the division of Bedmar's forces, while Marlborough held the two Marshals so closely that no help could be sent him. On the sixth day Opdam would advance against Antwerp from the north-east. Spaar would attack from the west, and Marlborough would be close at hand near Lierre with the main body. If Bedmar did not divide his forces Ostend would fall, an important prize would be gained, and further combinations would become possible. If, on the other hand, Bedmar defended Ostend, Opdam and Spaar would have a good superiority against him at Antwerp, and no help could come to him from the main army facing Marlborough. The French could choose between losing Ostend or Antwerp or both, or as an alternative weakening their main army, which Marlborough could then attack.

But Marlborough would have required the authority of Napoleon to compel this accurate execution of his intricate plan. Actually the Dutch commanders were not at all interested in Ostend. They were not attracted by opening any new line of communication from the sea to the English forces. They preferred English drafts and stores to pass through Holland. Cohorn used his influence at The Hague to substitute for the siege of Ostend a pillaging excursion into the Pays de Waes (the region between Antwerp and Ostend), from which

his office entitled him to receive 10 per cent. of any contributions exacted. Now, this diversion was not sufficiently remote from Antwerp to make Bedmar divide his forces beyond the power of swift recovery; and consequently Marlborough's combination would not become operative.

While the forces were taking their new positions in the north,

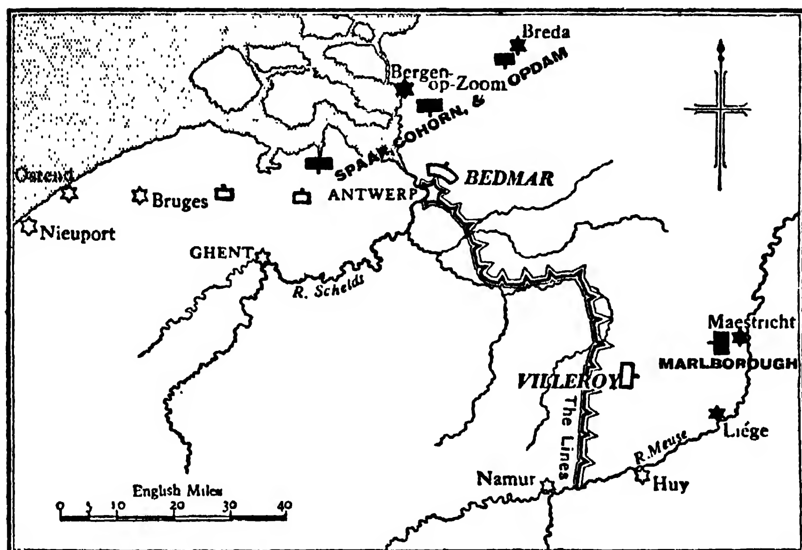


'THE GREAT DESIGN'

and while Cohorn was busy at The Hague, Marlborough sought to draw Marshal Villeroy southward farther away from Antwerp, hoping that by manœuvres he could place himself nearer Antwerp than the French main army. For this purpose he pretended with many elaborate refinements a siege of Huy. But the French had the advantage of their lines, behind which they could move in safety and along which they had stores of food and forage. Moreover, as the map will show, these lines, following the course of the Demer, bulged out convexly. Thus Marlborough must traverse the arc while Villeroy could follow the chord. Marlborough therefore required a considerable start to win a 'race to Antwerp.'

By the end of May Villeroy was lured down towards Huy, and almost as far from Antwerp as was Marlborough, and the Dutch army which was to begin the operations was gathered to the north of Antwerp and along the seaboard. But already at his camp at

Thys Marlborough received the disconcerting news that Cohorn had obtained permission to substitute for the siege of Ostend the raid into the Pays de Waes. The Duke saw at once that this change of plan would spoil his combination: and that his elaborate attempt to make siege and manœuvre warfare serve the purpose of battle, or bring about a battle which neither French nor Dutch could avoid,



THE JUNE SITUATION

would not succeed. From Thys he wrote to Godolphin on May 31:

> I am afraid the diversion M. Cohorn is gone to make in Flanders, will not oblige them to make any great detachment; for his design is not on Ostend, as I desired . . . It is no wonder that Cohorn is for forcing the lines; for as he is governor of West Flanders, he has the tenths of all the contributions.[1]

Both the main armies lay very close to one another, and the French had the remarkable spectacle of Marlborough remaining, with a slightly superior force, for eighteen days of the campaigning season motionless, inert, seemingly unwilling to fight or unable to manœuvre. The Marshals waited likewise in perplexity. We now know the reason. All this time Marlborough was beseeching Heinsius and the States-General either to allow him to deliver a battle or to make Cohorn attack Ostend.

[1] Coxe, i, 246.

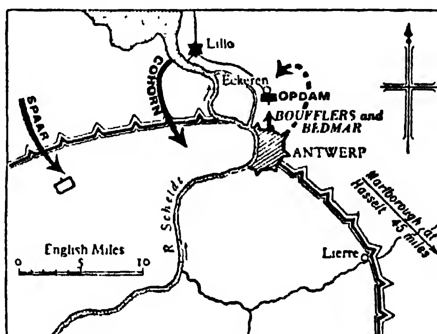
"I am now by my temper so inclined to quietness," he wrote to Godolphin (June 25), "that you will believe me when *I assure you, that no ambition of my own inclines me to wish a battle, but with the blessing of God, I think it would be of far greater advantage to the common cause, than the taking of twenty towns, so that as far as I can influence, I shall be far from avoiding it.*"[1]

Almost the whole of June thus passed in a tense immobility, the two principal armies facing each other at a few miles distance, or sidling this way or that in constant readiness for battle. But now the Dutch began to carry out as a disconnected operation and in the wrong way the northern part of Marlborough's design. On June 26 the attack from the seaboard began. For some days their movements had puzzled Bedmar. He felt himself about to be assailed, but at which point on his lightly guarded sixty-mile front from Antwerp to Ostend he could not tell. On the 27th Cohorn and Spaar fell from opposite directions upon the north-western salient of his lines and pierced them, Cohorn with scarcely any loss, Spaar after hard fighting. The Pays de Waes thus lay open to Dutch incursion, pillage, and contribution. The unwisdom of the Dutch action now became plain. The mere raiding of the countryside and the levying of a contribution, though pleasing to Cohorn and his troops and vexatious to the enemy, failed to make Bedmar change his general conceptions. He remained rightly concentrated in Antwerp. Cohorn's action was only a flourish, and a feint which did not deceive.

There was a second more disastrous error. Opdam, who was to attack Antwerp from the direction of Bergen-op-Zoom, should never have moved until the Cohorn-Spaar operations had had time to draw some reinforcements from Bedmar, nor above all until Marlborough and the main army had come near enough to support him. Nevertheless, the next day, June 28, Opdam, with 13 battalions and 26 squadrons, advanced in this faulty combination to Eckeren, four miles from Antwerp. Here he was in great danger. The three Dutch forces were widely separated from one another, and the French and Spaniards were concentrated in superior strength in the city close to Opdam. His subordinates, Slangenberg at their head, pointed out to him that he might be attacked by the enemy with fifty battalions, or at least three times his numbers. They prevailed on him to send his baggage to the rear. But for the rest he stood his ground, seemingly unconscious of his peril.

[1] Coxe, i, 250.

No positive information of their offensive had been sent by any of the Dutch generals to Marlborough, still sixty miles away at Thys. But evidently he had news of their movement; for on the 27th he suddenly broke his camp before daybreak and marched in the direction of Antwerp. Villeroy within a few hours was keeping pace with him within his lines along the road Landen-Diest. There could be no doubt that Villeroy could reach Antwerp before Marlborough. But if Opdam took care of himself the allied armies could still concentrate before Antwerp for battle with somewhat superior forces. However, on the 29th Villeroy learned of the Dutch incursion into the Pays de Waes, and also of the arrival of Opdam at Eckeren. He perceived at once that Opdam could be destroyed. On the night of the 29th he sent Marshal Boufflers, with 30 squadrons of cavalry and three thousand Grenadiers, helping themselves forward by holding on to the horsemen's stirrup-leathers, to join Bedmar, with orders to pass through the city of Antwerp and fall upon this exposed Dutch force. Villeroy, weakened by sending this detachment, marched the next day in anxiety lest Marlborough should attack him. But Marlborough did not know what he had done, and in any case was forbidden to seek a battle without specific authority from The Hague. During the 30th both armies were marching on parallel lines towards Antwerp through ceaseless rain and terrible mud. The French had every advantage of the short-cut and the stores of forage behind their lines. Marlborough, without knowing all the facts, was already deeply alarmed about Opdam. On the 29th he had sent him a most urgent warning of his danger and advised his immediate retirement towards Bergen-op-Zoom. But before this message could reach Opdam the blow had fallen.



ECKEREN

Early on the morning of July 1 Boufflers, reinforcing Bedmar with his cavalry and Grenadiers, who had marched nearly forty miles in twenty-four hours, debouched from Antwerp in four columns and fell upon Opdam. Boufflers had nearly forty thousand men against ten thousand. Luckily for the allies, this large force did

not immediately strike its quarry. Berwick says they had "to beat about the country for several hours as hunters would seek a boar". It was not till the evening that the surprise became effective. Opdam found himself enveloped by swiftly approaching superior forces. His line of retreat lay along a causeway to Lillo; but the French cavalry and dragoons, sweeping round his left, cut across the causeway, and had they promptly dug themselves in upon it would have caught everybody. Fierce fighting began. The French troops, strained to the utmost by their march, were met by the stubborn Dutch foot, and several brigades were not only repulsed, but fled in panic into Antwerp. The ground was divided by dykes and water-cou es, and a soldiers' battle began.

Opdam had a humiliating personal experience. With a few officers and horsemen he got separated from his troops, and, believing all was lost, galloped off to Breda. From here he sent two letters, one to Marlborough and one to the States-General, reporting that his army was destroyed. The messenger to Marlborough was captured by the French. The other letter reached The Hague after nightfall. The Council of State met together at Heinsius' house in consternation. Their action was worthy of their greatest national qualities. They at once sent Deputies to organize a front before Bergen-op-Zoom. At the same time they resolved to fill the gap in their forces which the destruction of Opdam's corps seemed to cause by hiring further contingents from Germany. Trusted emissaries took the roads to Münster and Berlin forthwith upon this quest. But meanwhile the Deputies who were on their way to the army met other tidings.

When darkness had fallen on July 1 the fighting was at its height. It continued in much confusion throughout the night. Opdam had disappeared, but on the bloodstained dyke stood Jacob Hop, Treasurer of the Republic. Strengthened by his authority and determination, General Slangenberg took command. Under his orders the Dutch, tough and desperate, beat off the superior numbers of the assailants, stormed and overwhelmed the French cavalry who lay across their line of retreat along the causeway, and when morning dawned were marching in stubborn array towards safety and Lillo. The hand-to-hand fighting in the afternoon and night had been so violent and disordered, and the Dutch at bay had shown such discipline and fury, that Antwerp was full of fugitives, and the French thought at first they had lost not only their prey, but the battle. It was not until daybreak that they realized they at

least possessed the field. They hastened to proclaim their victory, set themselves in imposing array, and advanced with drum and trumpet. They had indeed, if they had known it, finally ruptured "the Great Design." But Slangenberg, with the bulk of the Dutch troops, was beyond their reach.

This was the joyful news which met the Deputies as they hurried towards Bergen-op-Zoom, and they returned at once to report to the States-General that, although Opdam had run away and reported his army lost, Slangenberg had not despaired of the Republic and had cut his way out with heavy losses but in good order. Actually each side had lost about two thousand men killed and wounded, and the French had captured six cannon, nine hundred prisoners, and the Countess of Tilly, who was visiting her husband in male attire. (Berwick says "disguised as an Amazon.") The French boastings of victory and of their trophies did not mar the thankfulness of the Dutch at so narrow an escape.

We must now remind the reader of General Slangenberg. We met him last ten years ago at Walcourt when he and Marlborough from the two opposite flanks had fallen upon Marshal d'Humières's imprudently exposed army. Slangenberg's career had not been cheered by success. He had fought his way through William's wars, but his rancorous temper and vicious tongue had marred his fortunes, and he was still only a subordinate. Now in the hour of disaster he had emerged, a stern, embittered man, as the saviour of his country's honour. He was acclaimed with the wildest enthusiasm by both the oligarchy and the mob. His dispatches from the battlefield were modest, but upon this wave of national applause and in his just sense of his own deserts, the hatreds and jealousies which had long festered in his breast burst forth from him in a passion. All the reputation he had gained in that grim night he used to assail not only the conduct but the loyalty of the English Commander-in-Chief. He declared that Marlborough out of spite had left Opdam exposed and unsupported; that when Opdam's jeopardy was apparent he had neither sent him reinforcements (which was physically impossible) nor attacked Villeroy's army (which he was forbidden to do). Opdam, though his personal position was weak, seemed also inclined to associate himself with Slangenberg's charges. We can imagine the unpleasant character of these reproaches from such a man at such a time. But Marlborough's authority in Holland was deeply founded. His friendship with Heinsius, his hold upon the confidence of the Dutch, his position as the Queen of England's

Captain-General, were immediately found to be unshakable. There was a storm of criticism. The Dutch pamphlets during this summer are full of bitter references to the "foreign Commander-in-Chief" and his "unheard-of" maxims of war.

But all this abuse recoiled as a wave from the rock. It was Slangenberg who suffered. In Lediard's words, "he lost by his tongue what he had gained by his sword." The incident is interesting to us as a measure of the strength which Marlborough had acquired. That strength could not procure him an effectual command of the confederate army, but it was entirely unaffected by this sensational attack. There is no trace of his offering any explanation or excuse. His letters during the race to Antwerp narrate the event in his usual unmoved, matter-of-fact style, and from them we may now read in his own words, written day by day, the story of this fierce minor drama of the war.

John to Sarah

Sunday July 1

I have been in so perpetual a hurry, having marched five days together, and sometimes not coming into the camp till eleven or twelve at night, that I have not been able to answer so particularly your two last letters, as I shall always be desirous of doing. We have been obliged for many reasons to rest this day. However, it gives me very little rest, being obliged to have the general officers with me for regulating the next three days' march, so that I am obliged to take this time of writing, although I have several officers in my room talking about me; but as I love you above my life, so my greatest pleasure is writing to you, or hearing from you.[1]

Marlborough to Godolphin

July 2, 1703

. . . I am afraid the lucre of having a little contribution from the Pais de Waes, has spoiled the whole design. . . .

If M. Opdam be not upon his guard, he may be beat before we can help him, which will always be the consequence when troops are divided, so as that the enemy can post themselves between them. But we have given him such timely notice, that if he has not taken a safe camp, he will be very much to blame. . . .

Since I sealed my letter, we have a report come from Breda, that Opdam is beaten. I pray God it be not so, for *he is very capable of having it happen to him.*[2]

[1] Coxe, i, 253.

[2] *Ibid.*, 254, 255.

Marlborough to Godolphin

THIELEN
July 5, 1703

*As I was sealing my last letter to you, we were alarmed from Breda that Monsr Opdam was beaten. The news coming from himself we did not doubt it. His letter that he wrote to me was taken by a French party, so that I do not doubt but they will print it. He wrote the same account to the States that the whole army was lost, which put them under great apprehension. They met at twelve o'clock that night, and sent immediately three of their body to Berg-op-Zoom, to take care of that Frontier, and sent us a copy of what they had done. But they were not long under these apprehensions, having received a true account of the action from *Mons. Hop who had the honour of seeing more of it than the General that should have commanded.* He [Opdam] is gone back from Breda to the army. It is certain the troops did all as well as men could do, and certainly had the advantage over the French. However they will pretend, and make the World believe they had the best of it, and prove it by Opdam's letters. The enclosed is the copy of my letter to the Pensioner yesterday by which you will see my thoughts as to what I think we ought to do for the good of the Common Cause. The consideration of that makes me give my opinion so freely. I am very sensible that were I more cautious I should be less liable of being found fault with, but as long as I think I am in the right I shall venture for the good of the whole.

The French Army, and all their cannon fired three rounds yesterday in the evening. I suppose it was for the success the Elector of Bavaria has in the Tyrol; for he meets with no opposition. This will give the Emperor great trouble, as to the Communication with his troops in Italy. If the Dutch will not venture some thing at this time, I am afraid all Germany will have but too much reason to be angry with us.

. . . It is not to be imagin'd what our poor Foot has suffered in their last marches by the excessive rains we have had. My service pray to all with you.

In his letter to Heinsius he said:

THIELEN
July 3

. . . If you have a mind to have Antwerp, and a speedy end of the war, you must venture something for it. I have not consulted the generals, so that you must consider this as my single opinion; but if this should be approved by others, and be thought fit to be put in execution, you must then act as the French do, by drawing out of your garrisons all the battalions that are possible; *for those that can make the greatest fire will carry this matter.* And I think all officers will agree with me, that if they opiniatre the defence of the lines between Antwerp

and Lierre, and we should force them, they having a river behind them, it will be next to impossible for them to get off. On the other side, if they should take the resolution not to defend the lines, then the siege may be made with all the ease imaginable. Upon the whole matter, I take the good or bad success of this campaign depends upon the resolution that shall now be taken.

. . . I am confident if you miss this occasion, you will repent it when it is too late.[1]

This melancholy miscarriage reveals Marlborough's qualities as a general as well as any of his victories. His letters show his sure-footed comprehension and measurement of all the factors and forces at work. He foresaw the uselessness of Cohorn's raid. He knew at a distance, with almost uncanny prescience and far better than Opdam on the spot, the danger in which that strange military personage stood. He received the news of the downfall of his own plans without discouragement, and instantly formed others to restore the position. All the time while bearing the brunt of responsibility, and vexed by every kind of senseless obstruction, his vigilant, tireless mind has plenty of room for family affairs and for love-letters to Sarah. Afflicted by the most trying provocations, hampered and blamed, the sport of jealous and foolish rivals, the first army of France on his hands, battle possible any day at a few hours' notice, he only shows the more plainly his massive superiority alike over events and men, and over friend and foe.

[1] Coxe, i, 258–259.

Chapter Eleven

"VICTORIOUS WITHOUT SLAUGHTER"

1703—AUTUMN

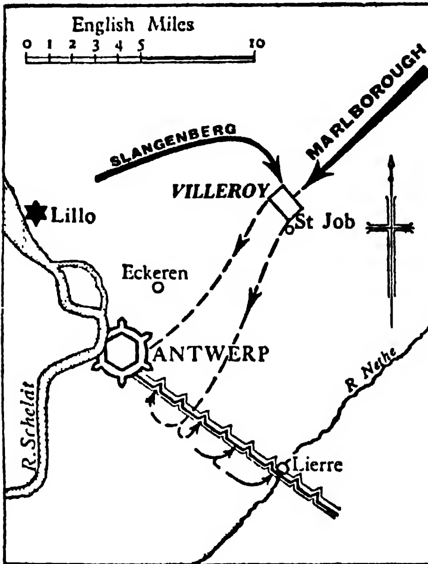
THERE was such good Parliamentary support in England for a campaign designed to capture Ostend and Antwerp that Marlborough, despite Slangenberg's virulence and the perturbation in Holland, was able to press hard for the second attempt. Marlborough's letter to Heinsius of July 3 had put the question of a main trial of strength in its most direct form. A council of war of all the Dutch commanders was ordered by the States-General to meet at Bergen-op-Zoom. Marlborough did not at first attend; and at this moment the feeling among the Dutch generals was hot against him. His proposal to force and attack the lines between Antwerp and Lierre was rejected. He refused to accept the first rejection. He repaired in person to the council. Again and again he reiterated his request. At last he actually wrung an assent, in form at least, from this unfavourable tribunal. It was at length resolved to "come to an engagement." The decision of the experts at Bergen-op-Zoom was thereupon remitted to the statesmen at The Hague.

Marlborough did not delude himself. He was gloomily certain that Villeroy would retire behind his fortifications as soon as the whole allied army advanced upon him, and that the Dutch would refuse to attack him there. The event warranted these misgivings. Before daylight on July 23 Slangenberg marched from Lillo to join Marlborough, and the whole army of the Sea Powers advanced upon the French camp. "I take it for granted," wrote Marlborough to Godolphin the night before, "that as soon as they know of our march they will retire behind their lines . . . I think it is one thousand to one they do not stay, for they can be behind their lines in one hour's march."

As soon as the heads of the allied columns were discerned Villeroy burned his camp and stores and swiftly retired within the fortifications of Antwerp and the Lines. Further councils of war ensued. After hours of fruitless discussion Marlborough could only end the

conclave by asking all the members to express their views in writing. "I see enough, I think, to be sure the Lines will not be attacked and that we shall return to the Meuse. I intend to go out to-morrow morning with a body of horse in hope to get near enough to view the lines."

The reconnaissance confirmed the Dutch generals in their opinion. What they saw of the strength of the works produced the worst impression upon them. Marlborough was still earnest for a general assault, and we do not know how he proposed to deliver it. But all the others resisted obdurately. Whether he or they were right was not proved. It would certainly have been a frontal attack upon a fortified position defended by an army four-fifths as strong as his own. It was then agreed to abandon the attempt upon Antwerp, and nothing remained but to return to the Meuse and lay siege to the minor fortress of Huy as a consolation.



VILLEROY'S WITHDRAWAL

To Godolphin, who voiced the English disappointment at the relinquishing of the Antwerp plan, Marlborough wrote:

HOUTHALEN
August 6, 1703

I am but too much of your mind, that the going back to the Meuse is, as the French expression is, a pis aller. But as Cohorn has managed his business for these last six weeks, we had nothing else to do. I know that Huy will make very little noise in the world. However, if we will [must] make the war in this country, it is very convenient for us to have that place. Our superiority is not so great, but that the French may reasonably expect to make us uneasy, when we shall be obliged to divide our forces, as we must do when we make the siege. If they give occasion, I hope we shall venture, by which God may give us more success *in three or four hours' time*, than we dare promise ourselves.[1]

[1] Coxe, i, 264.

On August 2 the allies, leaving Cohorn, who had quarrelled with Slangenberg, sulking on the seaboard, marched back southward. Villeroy kept pace with them inside his lines. On the 14th they arrived at Turinne. A corps under the Prince of Anhalt invested and began the siege of Huy, while Marlborough moved to Val Notre-Dame to cover the operation. The town and fortress of Huy lies on the Meuse amid picturesque wooded hills and steep bluffs rising from the river midway between Liége and Namur. It was still a point of strategic importance in the opening phase of the Great War. The investment was completed on August 15.

Amid these vexations Marlborough was keenly occupied with his family.

John to Sarah

THIELEN
August 4

★Upon your saying something to me in one of your letters of the company 53 [Lady Harriet] keeps, I wrote to her myself, not taking any notice of [mentioning] what you had said, that she could never find any lasting happiness in this world, but from the kindness of 27 [Mr Godolphin[1]], so that she ought to omit nothing that might oblige him. You must not ask her for this letter; but I should be glad to know if it has had any effect, for I love her, and think her very good, so that I should hope if she commits indiscretions, it is for want of thinking. I know you are so good and kind to them all, that I need not desire you to persist in letting her see her ruin, if she should govern herself any other way than you would have her. I know she loves and esteems you so that you may with kindness do much with her.

Many things may happen that the world may think will vex me, but nothing can go very near my heart but what concerns your dear self, and our children, and the Queen's welfare.[2]

By this time a dearer hope than "the great design" had died, and Sarah's health seemed seriously affected. She mourned both for her son, and that she could never bear another. We do not know what she wrote to her husband; but he made a great reply.

John to Sarah

OP-HEEREN
August 13

I have received yours of the 23rd, which has given me, as you may easily believe, a good deal of trouble. I beg you will be so kind and just to me, as to believe the truth of my heart, that my greatest concern is for that of your own dear health. It was a great pleasure to me when I thought that we should be blessed with more children; but

[1] Her husband, Francis Godolphin, afterwards the second Earl. [2] Extract.

as all my happiness centres in living quietly with you, I do conjure you, by all the kindness I have for you, which is as much as ever man had for woman, that you will take the best advice you can for your health, and then follow exactly what shall be prescribed for you, and I do hope you will be so good as to let me have an exact account of it, and what the physicians' opinions are. If I were with you I would endeavour to persuade you to think as little as is possible of worldly business, and to be very regular in your diet, which I should hope would set you right in a very little time, for you have naturally a very good constitution.

You and I have great reason to bless God for all we have, so that we must not repine at his taking our poor child from us, but bless and praise him for what his goodness leaves us; and I do beseech Him, with all my heart and soul, that he would comfort and strengthen both you and me, not only to bear this, but any other correction that He shall think fit to lay on us. The use I think we should make of this His correction is, that our chiefest time should be spent in reconciling ourselves to him, and having in our minds always that we may not have long to live in this world. I do not mean by this that we should live retired from the world; for I am persuaded that, by living in the world, one may do much more good than by being out of it, but at the same time to live so as that one should cheerfully die when it shall be his pleasure to call for us. I am very sensible of my own frailties; but if I can be ever so happy as to be always with you, and that you comfort and assist me in these my thoughts, I am then persuaded I should be as happy and contented as it is possible to be in this world; for I know we shall both agree, next to our duty to God, to do what we ought for the Queen's service.[1]

John to Sarah

VAL NOTRE-DAME
Aug. 16

I am so very uneasy since I received yours of the 23rd of the last month, that I shall have no rest till I hear again from you, for your health is much dearer to me than my own. It is impossible for me to express what I feel, having seen by my Lord Treasurer of the same post, that he thought you very far from being well. For God's sake let me know exactly how you are; and if you think my being with you can do you any good, you shall quickly see you are much dearer to me than fame, or whatever the world can say; for, should you do otherwise than well, I were the unhappiest man living. We invested Huy yesterday, and I am afraid it will be a fortnight before we shall be masters of the castle. I pray God your next may put me more at ease than I am at this present.[2]

[1] Coxe, i, 229–231.

[2] *Ibid.*, 229.

Marlborough to Godolphin

VAL NOTRE-DAME
August 16th, 1703

*Since my last I have had none of yours, and the wind being in the east I am afraid I shall not have any for some time, which makes me very uneasy, for your last has given me great unquietness as to my Lady Marl.['s] health. For God's sake let me have a particular account; and if she does not go to the Bath with the Queen, I hope her Majesty and yourself will prevail with her, to enter into such a course of physic as she shall be advised to, or that the Queen will take her to the Bath with her: for I am very sure to leave her alone will not be good for her health. I am sure too [if it would] do her any good, with the Queen's leave, I would immediately come over, notwithstanding that I am very sensible how the world would censure me; but I hope she will be governed by the Queen and you, so as that I may make an end of this campaign with some quiet of mind, which I can't do if I do not hear that she is in a good way; for I have no ambition or other thought left, but of serving the Queen to the utmost of my power, and ending my days quietly with Lady Marl.

I came to this place yesterday. The bridge below the town of Huy was made in the afternoon, and that above the town will be finished I hope this night, so that we are now landing the artillery. But the hills all about Huy are so very steep that I am afraid we shall not set the cannon to the batteries till this day senight.

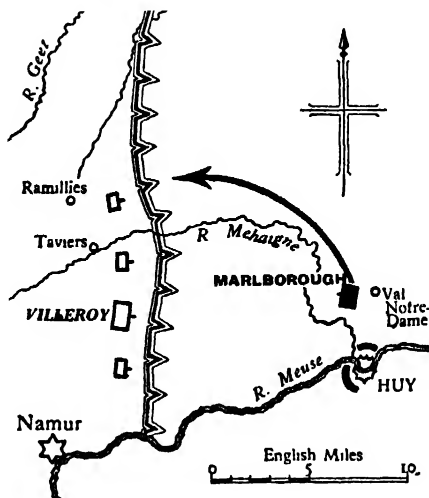
While the Dutch were effectually paralysing Marlborough in the Low Countries, and frittering away the months in which they had a local superiority, the course of the general war turned sharply and sourly against the allies. The grand conception which the treason of the Elector of Bavaria and the progress of the Hungarian revolt had enabled Louis XIV to form was being brilliantly executed. In Italy Vendôme held the flower of the Imperial troops, twenty thousand veterans under Starhemberg, fully occupied. For the whole course of the summer the Austrians were confined in their entrenched camps by overwhelming opposition. Meanwhile the main resources of France were concentrated in Alsace, and acted from Strasburg. The combination of Tallard and Villars completely dominated this theatre. While Tallard pinned the Margrave to the defence of the Lines of Stollhofen, Villars plunged deep into Germany to join the Elector of Bavaria. On March 11 he had captured his bridgehead, the fortress of Kehl, opposite Strasburg. A choice was open to him. He could join with Tallard in driving the Margrave from his lines, and then take the easy valleys round the north of the Black Forest; or he could attempt to traverse the

lonely passes to the south. He chose the mountain road. His vanguard had left Offenburg on April 27, and he followed with the main army on April 30. In his memoirs he describes how the slightest organized opposition would have prevented his march. But the Margrave could not believe that Villars intended to lead thirty thousand men through the heart of the Black Forest. Villars was therefore opposed only by the local German militia, and on May 8 he dined with the Elector at Riedlingen, on the Danube. The long-sought-for junction had at last been effected. A Franco-Bavarian army far stronger than any force of which the Empire could dispose stood in the centre of Germany with power to move in any direction.

The French plan unfolded step by step. In June Vendôme, leaving Starhemberg blockaded in his camps, began to move upon the Brenner towards the Tyrol. At the same time the revolt in Hungary assumed a new importance. It had begun as a rising of Roman Catholic peasants against Protestant landlords. Under the influence of French gold and the pressure of French diplomacy it had now become a national Hungarian rebellion against the Emperor. The Protestant landlords armed their Catholic tenantry against a common foe. There then began those disastrous forays in which at times before the end of 1703 the rebels plundered and burned almost to the gates of Vienna. Under these triple thrusts the entire structure of the Empire threatened to dissolve. The exertions of 1702 had ruined its finances; the disasters of 1703 broke its military power. Of what use was it to think of campaigns on the Rhine, of conquests in Italy, or of the Spanish inheritance, when the Austrian Hereditary Lands were the prey of the rebel and the spoiler; and when the venerable capital of Central Europe, Vienna itself, might in a few months witness the triumphal entry of Max Emmanuel, or endure the ravages of the outlaw Rakoczy? Here was this great power of the Empire, which was pledged to place ninety thousand men in the field against France, now completely absorbed by its own perils and internal stresses, able only to cry aloud for help from those allies which it had so woefully failed. Yet the downfall to the Empire meant the loss of the war.

The dyke-mind of the Dutch was possessed by the desire for a strong fortress barrier defended by the largest possible army. Huy commended itself to them as a preliminary to the capture of Limburg and, in a future campaign, the regaining of Namur. These seemed to their statesmen and their generals objectives at once

practical and satisfying. But Marlborough felt the war in every theatre. He suffered with the Margrave on the Rhine or on the Danube, with Eugene now trying to quell or appease the Hungarian rebels, with Starhemberg marooned in Italy. He held the nominal command of the largest and finest armies on either side in any quarter. A battle won by these armies even in the fortified zones of the Netherlands would "in three or four hours" change all the values, and the impingement of all the forces throughout Europe. How shameful to sit idle in superior strength at such a time! How horrible to contemplate the penalty which 1704 would exact for the sloth of 1703!



MARLBOROUGH'S PROPOSAL

The Dutch Field Deputies and all the generals gathered round him at Val Notre-Dame, the headquarters from which he covered the siege of Huy. A vehement council of war was held on August 24. Once again he proposed a plan of battle. He demanded a general attack upon the lines, which in this part of the country between the river Mehaigne and the minor fortress of Léau he considered "contemptible." The nature of the country on this sector would allow the whole allied army to be employed. In a battle upon a six-mile front the advantage would rest with the larger army and the heavier fire. The French Marshals would not be able to meet such an assault upon an equal front. Either they would retire, or a trial of strength under favourable conditions would ensue. In Flanders the defeat—perhaps destruction—of the French army and the rupture of their vaunted lines would open fine prospects. In Europe it would stem and turn the tide.

Again the discussions were interminable. This time all the generals except the Dutch—even the commanders of their own mercenaries—agreed with Marlborough. But the Dutch were solid, and the deadlock was complete. Both sides drew up their reasons in writing for submission to The Hague. Marlborough's paper, which was signed by the generals of the English, of the Danes, of

the Lünebergers, and of the Hessians, thirteen persons in all, declared:

> If we do not attack the enemy in this place, with the finest troops that can be seen, and such superiority as we cannot expect to have next year, it will be evident, not only to our Allies (to their great discouragement), but the Enemy may with reason boast that these lines, which they will make stronger every day, are an invincible barrier against the troops of the Allies.
>
> ... The Enemy being superior in Italy, and in the Empire, and being out-numbered no where but here, the Eyes of all the Allies are fixed upon us, and they will have cause justly to blame our conduct, if we do not do all that is possible to relieve them, by obliging the Enemy to call back such succours into these parts, which is not to be done but by pushing boldly.[1]

Against this the Dutch generals contended that the choice lay between attacking the lines or besieging Limburg. "Without doubt the first would be the more glorious attempt, but . . ."; they then proceeded to elaborate the difficulties of the ground to be attacked, and all the many dangers and obstacles that would be encountered, even if the first assault were successful. For this purpose they enlarged upon the strength of the various positions in rear of the lines. There was one position to which they drew particular attention. "For instance, that of Ramillies, where, their right being extended to the Mehaigne, near Taviers, and their left towards Ramillies, and Autréglise, they will have a narrow aperture of but 1200 paces to defend."[2]

Marlborough was not convinced that this dreaded position of Ramillies was incapable of being attacked with success. On the contrary, he believed that it, like others, could be mastered by the manœuvres and resolute fighting of a good and powerful army. He must have meditated a great deal upon this already well-known position at Ramillies, and he saw no reason to be afraid of it. It is noteworthy that the French engineers who had sited the lines in 1701 noticed its serious defect. It was concave, and the defenders would not be able to move troops from one flank to the other as quickly as the assailants. The engineers therefore excluded it from their line of defence. Nearly three years were, however, to pass before Marlborough was able to prove with only equal forces that their judgment and his own were right.

The Dutch generals concluded by urging the siege of Limburg,

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 165, 166.

[2] Lediard, i, 263.

but added, "Whatever resolution shall be taken, we whose names are underwritten will not fail to contribute all we can to facilitate the execution of it."

On August 25 Huy capitulated. Marlborough in his congratulatory report to the States-General on the success, "though small," sent them the opposed conclusions of the council of war, and his own appeal and warning:

> . . . The Allies rightly expect that we on our side should do something striking [*éclatant*]; the situation of their affairs even demanding prompt relief by a powerful diversion which would oblige the enemy to retire from the Empire. I can assure your High Mightinesses that this is very much expected in England and also without doubt in Holland, which would gain the greatest advantage. I can even say that in our case it is very necessary, for there are signs that people would be in a bad humour at home this winter with such a superiority if the campaign went by without something considerable. For the rest I cannot forbear from observing to your High Mightinesses it would seem that according to the arguments of the other generals we are obliged to act on the defensive; and those who agree with them must admit the increase of the enemy's strength next year will be such that we cannot hope for the same superiority; so that it will no longer be possible to think of making war on the Two Crowns in this country. . . . Success would be very glorious . . . and could still lead us very far before the end of the campaign, provided that the matter is taken up without losing a moment.

He concluded:

> So far as I am concerned, I feel that your High Mightinesses are sure that I shall always be ready to expose myself everywhere for the welfare of the Common Cause.[1]

Fruitless counsel—vain appeal. The States threw it back to their Field Deputies; their Field Deputies threw it back to their generals, The attack upon the lines was forbidden. The siege of Limburg was prescribed.

Even the most hostile Continental historians are struck by Marlborough's resiliency. Every action that he thought vital to the success of the war was denied him. His opinion as Captain-General and deputy Captain-General of the two armies was brushed aside, as though he were a suitor with a doubtful case before some small tribunal. He preserved an imperturbable demeanour. The usually censorious Klopp writes:

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 167.

We see the extraordinary pertinacity of this man who does not relax his efforts at any misfortune, at any lack of foreign insight or goodwill, but with the same tirelessness renounces one favourite plan in order straightway to adopt another. The correspondence of Marlborough with the principal Dutch Field Deputies, Geldermalsen and Hop, never reveals any irritability on his side, but, on the contrary, continual deference, whether real or assumed, to their opinion. At this time he laid before Geldermalsen a proposal to reform the discipline of the Dutch army which implied his complete confidence in the Deputy.[1]

Count Goes, the Ambassador, has left us a contemporary comment:

> It is to be regretted that all important affairs are handled here with such confusion. And yet it cannot be otherwise under the present constitution of the Republic. Greater confusion still is to be expected unless Divine Providence grants what there is no sign of at present, that a true head take over the conduct of military affairs. For every burgomeister and every alderman here is determined to understand the profession, and register his vote how Europe must be regulated. The experts dare not speak out decisively against them.[2]

But, as we shall see from Marlborough's letters, his stress of soul and inward vexation were so great as to make him physically ill. To be thus continually thwarted and forbidden to carry out what his genius told him was right, and what his knowledge of the whole war declared vital to the Common Cause, roused passions in his breast, the more tormenting because borne with apparent composure. He burned with suppressed anger; he was wracked with headaches; a profound loathing for the conditions of his task possessed him. He spoke no word of complaint or menace before subordinates, but he resolved to be quit of such stifling responsibilities. This should be his last campaign. He would serve no more under intolerable conditions. He bore all the responsibility before Europe and before his professional opponents, and yet was constantly prevented from doing justice to his task.

Marlborough to Heinsius

September 10, 1703

> *I do call God to witness that after I had seen the Lines upon Wednesday and Thursday I was confirmed in my opinion that we should have forced them with the loss of very few men. We should have taken their lines by storm with very little loss. But the discord

[1] Klopp, x, 377. [2] Goes' dispatch, September 21; Klopp, *ibid.*

> in our camp will encourage the enemy, who knows everything that goes on among us. But even if I were given millions I would not again serve in the field with such obstacles and forced to depend upon the unanimous consent of the generals. I would rather die than put up with anything like it again. No plan remains secret, and with such procedure as this there cannot be any discipline in the camp.
>
> The States can send to me in the camp as many Deputies as they like, and I will always satisfy their judgment, but if the States are upon the whole of the opinion that my services in the field are generally of any use, *I will for the future command the troops that are in the pay of England*, and the States can supplement them by as many battalions as they think advantageous to their own interest.[1]

Not so far away across the narrow seas the peaches were ripening in his garden at Holywell. The trees he had planted were growing up, and the trout stirred in the fish-ponds. He had affluence now, the highest rank, and a name already famous. The formidable enemy was the least of his troubles. All his strength was consumed by his friends, allies, and subordinates. On every side—in the field, at The Hague, in Parliament—opponents, rivals, detractors, plied their arts with bristling diligence. Was it strange that home, peace, rest, his children, Sarah, presented themselves in irresistible contrast? But then, the Queen—the Common Cause—the unbroken might of France! A deep longing to retire possessed him. He would not act in haste. At least he would wait until he had calmed his spirit and recovered his health. But he must have relief: he must break away from futile, interminable disputations with jealous or obstinate subordinates. He would go somewhere where he would not see their faces for a while. If all they would do was to besiege Limburg, at any rate he would have this excursion for himself. On September 6 he announced that he proposed to conduct the siege of Limburg in person. He handed over the command of the covering army to Overkirk, and hastened to a scene of local action where "I shall have none about me but such as seek to do my bidding." This remedy for his mental distress proved for the time being effective. Directing the siege, planting the batteries, mingling with the troops, tramping the trenches, in the fresh air and under fire, he regained in a fortnight his poise and good humour. His blood was cooled, his headaches departed; and yet ever and again when he thought of how he had been baulked, of wasted opportunities, of a campaign marred, and of a world war which had definitely

[1] Von Noorden, i, 352.

turned against the allies, his wish to leave the field and the service rose up again within him. But his letters can best tell the tale.

John to Sarah

VAL NOTRE-DAME
August 23, 1703

*I am very sorry to find by yours of the 3rd that you were not then perfectly recovered. We have so many here that think they have a right of being consulted before anything is positively resolved, that I am not able to tell you what will be the next step after this business is over; but I can let you know that my own opinion is that nothing is to compare to that of forcing the lines, that if I can be able to influence any, it shall [be] for that attempt; for the lines on this side are really contemptible, so that I can't but think when they shall see us in earnest they will not dare defend them. . . .

You may be sure that I shall do what I can to be early in England this year; but I am afraid it will be impossible for me to be there before the end of October, for the Dutch officers have so many disputes amongst themselves, that should I leave the Army before they receive their orders for their winter quarters, I am sure some misfortune would happen to them; but I shall endeavour to make this campaign shorter than the last. . . .

Marlborough to Godolphin

VAL NOTRE-DAME
August 30, 1703

*You will see by the answer to my letter I wrote to the States that they are unwilling to decide against their own Generals. . . . I thought we should certainly have attacked the lines, but the Dutch Generals having again this day insisted upon the not attacking of the lines, but for the making of the siege of Limburg, the Deputies have again this night sent another express to The Hague; so that I believe this matter at last will end with the Siege of Limburg, after which I shall be thinking of coming to The Hague; and then I may be in England against the time you desire; *for I shall not be very fond of staying with an Army that is to do no more but eat forage.*

If I leave the Army some time before they go to garrison, it would be for the honour of the English that the right wing should be commanded by an Englishman, and that can't be, there being several Lt. Generals amongst the foreigners that are older than our Lt. Generals; so that I would beg the favour of the Queen, that I might have a commission sent me for my brother, he being the eldest Lt. G., to be General of the Foot. I desire nobody might know of the commission, for if I did not leave the Army before they went to garrison, I would not make use of the commission.

My Lady Marlborough has given me so many assurances that she will take care of her health that I am much more at ease than I was; for tho I am pressing people here with the hazard of my life to do what is good for themselves, yet I assure you, I have no other thoughts of happiness but after all is over, to be grateful to the Queen, and to deserve the continuance of your friendship, and end my days quietly with my Lady Marl.; so that should she do other ways than well, I were the unhappiest man alive.

The first paragraph of the following letter has an ugly significance which a later chapter will explain.

Marlborough to Godolphin

ST TROND
Sept. 6, 1703

★When I wrote to you by the last post I was so tired, and my eyes so sore that I hardly knew what I wrote. *I shall be sure to quarter the English so as that they may be embarked in 24 hours*, and if you approve of it, I am very certain when I shall be at The Hague I can settle the matter so, as that if there should be occasion, the Queen might have what number of troops she pleases; for as I am fully persuaded if Holland were ruined, England could not be happy, so if England should be invaded, Holland could not subsist; that if France, *or Scotland* should disturb England, I am confident all honest people here would be very ready to help her Majesty with all their forces.

I dare not say to you what I think of some of those gentlemen that have hindered us from forcing the lines; but I am very confident before this campaign is ended they will be ashamed of it, for they begin already to say that if they had had more cannon they would not have been against it.

I am going to the siege of Limburg so that I believe I shall be a fortnight from this army, in which time I hope to recover my health, for the unreasonable opposition I have met with for the attack of the lines has heated my blood so that I am almost maddened with the headache.[1]

Marlborough to Godolphin

ALDERBEESTEN
Oct. 11, 1703

★I find by my Lady Marl. of the 20th, this will find you at Newmarket, where I hope you will have had good luck, and perfect health. Since I see by your last the convoy [of battleships] can't be in Holland till the middle of the next month, I shall continue longer in the Army than I intended; for I do not care to be above four or five days at The Hague.

[1] Extract.

We have as yet no news of the King of Spain's arrival at Düsseldorf, so that I am not certain whether I shall wait upon him there or in Holland; but I shall order it so that it shall not keep me one day longer on this side, I being very desirous of being with you; for I really am so weary of all the business of this world, that I have no pleasure but in the expectation I have of being with you and Lady Marl. . . .

What I am going to say does not proceed from my being at the head of the Army, for I hope this is my last year of serving; but I beg of you for the good of England to consider what measures ought to be taken; for, if it be true that an offensive war must not be made in this country, I have but too much reason to apprehend that the consequence of that would be that the Dutch would not think themselves safe. I think they have been much to blame in not venturing something this summer; but that must not let me forget that when they are ruined, we are undone. You can judge of this better than anybody, so that I could not forbear letting you have my thoughts, not knowing but you might think something proper for me to do before I leave this country. . . .

The negotiations with Portugal, in describing which for convenience we have somewhat pressed upon chronology, had reached their conclusion in July; and the Emperor's second son, the Archduke Charles, already proclaimed King of Spain by the Grand Alliance, was now to set out to conquer his kingdom. For this purpose he counted upon an Anglo-Dutch corps of veterans, and upon Portugal as an ally and as his base.

'King Charles III' of Spain arrived at Düsseldorf on October 16. It was arranged that Marlborough should meet him there. Many compliments of interest to aristocratic Europe were interchanged. Marlborough made a remark the significance of which will soon appear. "I have just had the honour of putting Your Majesty in possession of Limburg." The young King replied, "I hope to be yet more indebted to your valour for the reduction of other places to my obedience." After an animated conversation he took from his side a sword richly set with diamonds, and presented it to Marlborough with the words, "I am not ashamed to own that I am a poor Prince, having no other inheritance than my cloak and my sword. My sword may be serviceable to Your Grace, and I hope you will not esteem it the less because I have worn it a day. I hoped to present it to you at the head of that gallant army with which you have performed such great actions." Marlborough kissed the hilt and replied, "This sword acquires an additional value

in my eyes, because Your Majesty has condescended to wear it; for it will always remind me of your just right to the Spanish crown, and of my obligation to hazard my life and all that is dear to me, in making you the greatest prince in Christendom."[1]

But neither these amenities nor the action and exercise of the siege of Limburg affected Marlborough's resolve to quit the command.

The capture of Limburg ended the campaign. As the fastness of Guelders, protected by its morasses, had also been starved out during the summer, Spanish Guelderland and the whole of the Bishopric of Liége had been restored to the allies. The capture of Limburg and Guelders raised issues which shook the structure of the Grand Alliance to its foundations, and were of the same nature as those which finally dissolved it. Guelders had been taken by the Prussian general Count Lottum. Louis XIV had already offered Spanish Guelderland to the new Prussian monarchy as a bid for an alliance. Frederick I had with many backward glances spurned the temptation. He not unnaturally claimed as good payment from the allies for his loyalty as he would have received from France for his desertion. But the Dutch wanted Guelders for themselves. It was to be part of their barrier. The States-General demanded that the stronghold should be placed in their charge, and their Commissioner thrust himself forward with warrant and proclamation. But the Prussians said that the fortress captured by Prussian blood must be garrisoned by Prussian troops. They did not care whether it was counted as part of the inheritance of the house of Hapsburg, or whether it fell within the disputed sphere of the Dutch compensation claims. There they were, and there they stayed.

Limburg raised in an even more acute form the rival claims of Holland and the Empire. Here the Empire had the law and the Dutch the force. The Empire was failing in all its obligations to the Alliance. Barely a fifth of the troops it had engaged to march against France were in the field. The Emperor had already craved and received succour. Marlborough had prevailed upon the States-General to send their General Goor and twelve battalions to aid the Margrave between the Rhine and the Danube. While, however, the Hapsburg Empire revealed month by month its awful collapse as a fighting unit, its rulers abated no jot of their titular and sacred rights. Limburg was a part of the Spanish Netherlands—no mere Guelderland or Bishopric, but undoubted Belgium. By all the causes for which the war was being fought it belonged to the

[1] Coxe, i, 291.

Spanish monarchy. But the Dutch, who maintained in their solid persevering manner over 100,000 troops in operation against the enemy, meant to have for themselves Limburg and all the Belgian fortresses Marlborough might take as part of the Dyke, and also for their commercial profit. And here force was on their side. This direct collision between the Empire and the Republic, both indispensable allies, confronted Marlborough with a crucial task. Perhaps one of his reasons, apart from temperamental self-indulgence, for taking the siege into his own hands was the need for him to be in physical control at this diplomatic storm-centre. The representatives of the Empire, strong in their indefeasible right, proceeded to assume the government of Limburg; and the Dutch, with brawn and bayonets, and that kind of rough justice which asserts itself among allies in war whatever the parchments say, pushed the Imperial Commissioner from their path with complete indifference to all the consequences.

Here Marlborough acted the statesman as decisively as he ever acted in the field. He met the pretensions of the Dutch, the appeals of his invaluable friend Heinsius, and the physical obtrusiveness of the Dutch agent, with uncompromising resistance. No one knew better than he the strength of the Dutch and the weakness of the Empire. But if the Grand Alliance was to continue this seizing of territory as booty wherever the armies marched, without regard to treaties and hereditary rights, must be stopped. He stopped it. The municipal administration of Limburg was transferred to the Imperial Ambassador. It is true that the Dutch, in default of Imperial troops, garrisoned the place, and collected the revenues, but the title-deeds were preserved intact for a future peace conference. The Limburg dispute was the first stage in the famous Dutch Barrier question which, in spite of all the victories yet to be gained, was slowly to rend the alliance. These discordances were an unfortunate preliminary to the fresh demands which Marlborough must make upon the States-General for further sacrifices and risks to save the Empire.

The Dutch alliance was indeed creaking. Parliament had only consented to provide an additional ten thousand men at the beginning of 1703 on the condition that the Dutch abandoned their habit of trading with the enemy. The States-General had agreed to this, but had not kept their word. Pressed as they were for money to carry on the war, they could not in practice deny themselves the earnings of the lucrative French carrying trade; and all their wealthy citizens who lived by this brought, as may well be imagined, every kind of

pressure to bear upon the assembly. But the House of Commons was indignant at this process of nourishing France with the one hand while fighting her with the other.

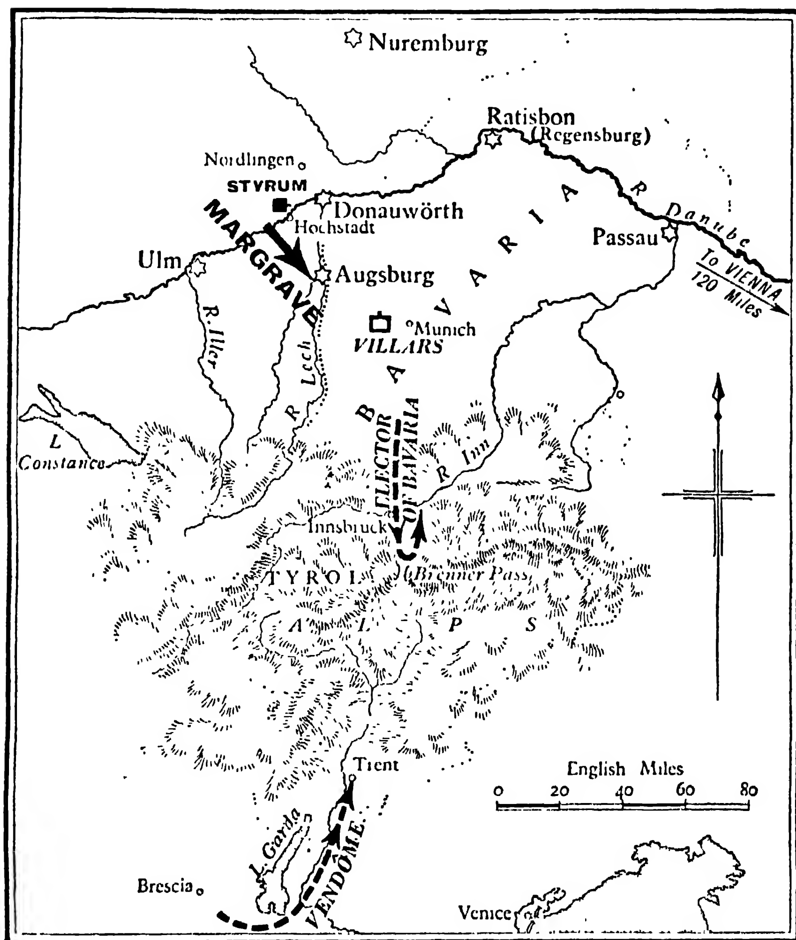
The Dutch had a counter-grievance. Nottingham, as Secretary of State, had sent Marlborough peremptory orders to embark four battalions for the expedition to Portugal. Marlborough had obeyed the lawful command of Crown and Parliament. He had even, in spite of his vexation, taken pains to make sure that the battalions selected for this special service should be of the best quality and up to strength. But he saw and explained with apprehension the effect which the arbitrary withdrawal of English troops from the Netherlands would produce upon the Dutch. The quotas had been fixed by treaty. "I cannot but say," Marlborough wrote to Godolphin, "that the Dutch argue very justly. If the Queen can without their consent take these men, she may by the same reason recall the rest; and by the same reasoning they are at liberty to reduce as many as they please of their army."[1] He begged Godolphin to prevent Hedges and Nottingham treating the Dutch Ambassador roughly when he waited on them in strong protest.

Meanwhile the year 1703 drew to a grievous conclusion for the allies. The two Marshals had successfully discharged their minor part in the Low Countries. They had maintained themselves against superior armies with only the loss of three lesser fortresses out of more than thirty which they held. Elsewhere France had triumphed. The French were dominant in Alsace and upon the Upper Rhine. Their bridgehead from Strasburg to Kehl opened the road to Bavaria. Villars had traversed the Black Forest and joined the Elector. Vendôme, advancing upon the Brenner, had isolated Starhemberg in Italy. The genius of Prince Eugene was absorbed in the distracted war councils of Vienna or in attempting to placate or crush the Hungarian insurgents. The Empire, unyielding in its legal rights, unbending in its ceremonial, was at the last gasp.

On the other hand were consolations of various kinds. Villars was soon at odds with the Elector. The audacious Marshal wished to march upon Vienna with the combined Franco-Bavarian army, which at the end of June amounted to nearly seventy thousand men. But Max Emmanuel took a different view of policy and strategy. He coveted new territory. He marched into the Tyrol from the north, while Vendôme assailed it from the south. Leaving Villars to guard

[1] The Hague, October 30, 1703; Coxe, i, 292.

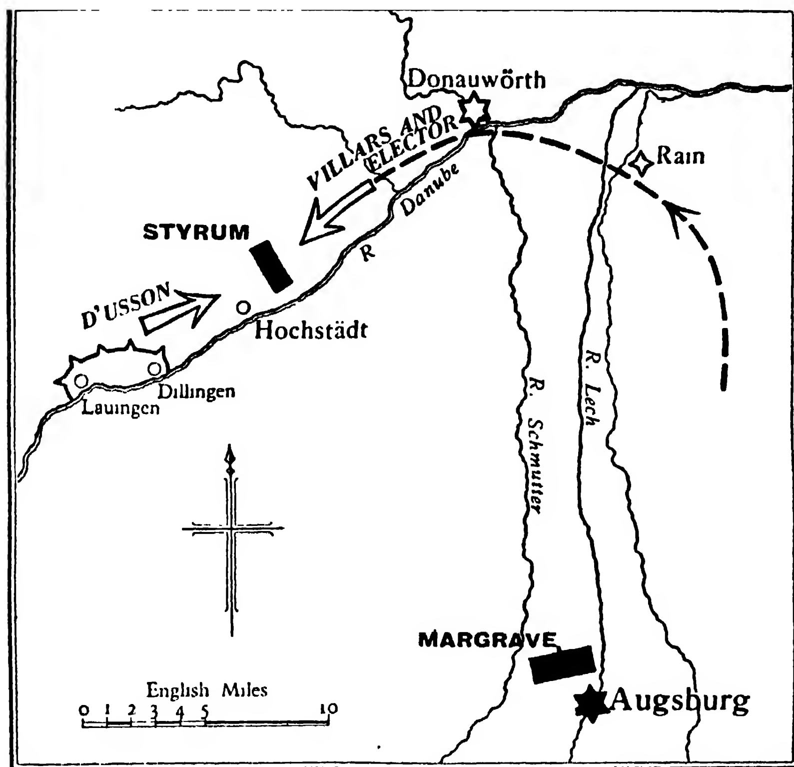
Bavaria from the Margrave and his generals, he established himself at Innsbrück. Simultaneously Vendôme advanced from Brescia towards the Brenner. The French had reason to expect aid from their sympathizers among the discontented Tyrolese nobility. But



THE CAMPAIGN IN BAVARIA AND THE TYROL

these hopes were dashed by the violent patriotic reaction among all classes in the Tyrol against the double invasion and the exactions which the Elector was already levying upon the northern districts. The Tyrolese when roused were among the finest troops in Europe. Their Landsknechte had formed the heart of the armies which had fought the French under Maximilian and Charles V, and won Italy

for the Hapsburgs in the sixteenth century. The old traditions were still alive, and the musters were carried through with almost the speed of the great days. A peasant rising in the valley of the Upper Inn spread in a week through the whole of the Tyrol. The lesser noblemen and peasants served side by side with the high aristocracy.



THE FIRST BATTLE OF HÖCHSTÄDT

Together they swiftly hustled the Elector out of their country. Vendôme at the same time was brought to a standstill at Trent before he could even enter the Brenner, and his army played no part in the general war from the beginning of July to the middle of September. Max Emmanuel's attempt upon the Tyrol thus ended in failure—rapid, complete, and ignominious. The episode was disastrous to French prestige throughout Italy. It was watched by no more attentive eye than that of Victor Amadeus.

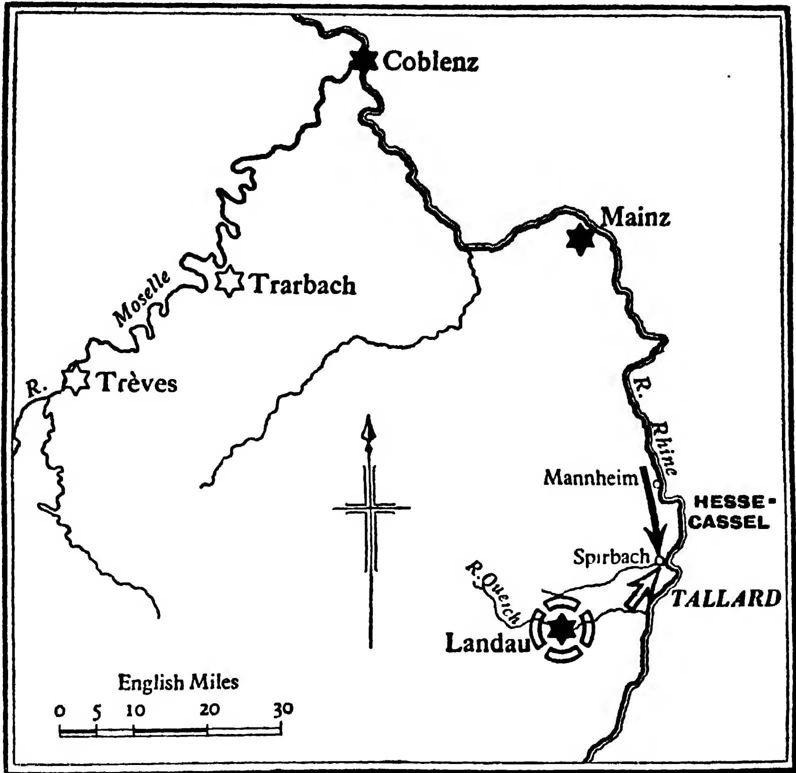
Meanwhile elsewhere the position grew steadily worse. At the end of July the Margrave, leaving General Thüngen to guard the

Lines of Stollhofen against Tallard, joined his other lieutenant, Count Styrum, who confronted Villars on the Danube. Crossing this river in August, he entered Bavaria and laid siege to the free city of Augsburg. His position threatened the Elector's retreat from the Tyrol and at the same time exposed Bavaria to ravage. The Elector, drawn by these needs in front, and impelled by the vigorous Tyrolese at the rear, hastened home. His arrival with his well-trained Bavarians transformed the scene. He was able, on the one hand, to besiege Ratisbon, and, marching with his main body, joined Villars opposite Count Styrum on the Danube. Styrum lay across the French communications with a force of eighteen thousand men. He posted himself before the town of Höchstadt, of which we shall hear more in another year. Villars and the Elector, crossing the Danube by the bridgehead fortress of Donauwörth, marched upon him with combined forces. On September 20 Count Styrum, taken between two fires, was defeated in a severe action at Höchstadt and retreated in disorder upon Nördlingen. The Margrave was now himself in turn cut off at Augsburg, but he managed to escape across the Danube and retired into the Black Forest north of Lake Constance. Thus it was the Elector who took the free city of Augsburg; and Ratisbon, the seat of the Imperial Diet, also fell into his hands. The result, therefore, of these complicated marchings and counter-marchings was grievously adverse to the Empire. Moreover, Tallard had also been active. In spite of his strong superiority, he had not dared to attack the Lines of Stollhofen, but he had taken the fortress of Old Brisach in September, and in October invested Landau.

In spite of these successes the quarrel between Villars and the Elector grew to a height. The Marshal felt that his grand design against Vienna had been sacrificed for minor and disjointed operations, one of which had been a grotesque failure. His breach with Max Emmanuel became irreparable. Louis XIV had no doubt where his interest lay. He discarded his Marshal in favour of his ally. He deemed the Elector the ablest German prince of the age, with the best army. He regarded the Bavarian alliance as the keystone of his policy in Germany. He foresaw decisive results by this agency and channel in the coming year. He recalled Villars to Versailles, and sent him to cope with the rising in the Cevennes. Marshal Marsin succeeded Villars in the command of the French army in Bavaria.

Marlborough had put the bulk of his army into winter quarters,

and was forced himself by the political situation and the insistent appeals of Godolphin to return to England. He had resolved and had obtained the Dutch consent to make a lodgment on the Moselle. The Prince of Hesse-Cassel, with 22 battalions and 30 squadrons, was sent from Coblenz with orders to retake Trèves and Trarbach



SPIRBACH

and settle himself in winter quarters there. He was now diverted to the relief of Landau. But this enterprise gravely miscarried, and in the middle of November Tallard, who had received heavy reinforcements, fell upon Hesse-Cassel at Spirbach and routed him with slaughter. This action decided the fate of Landau, which surrendered to the French at the end of November.

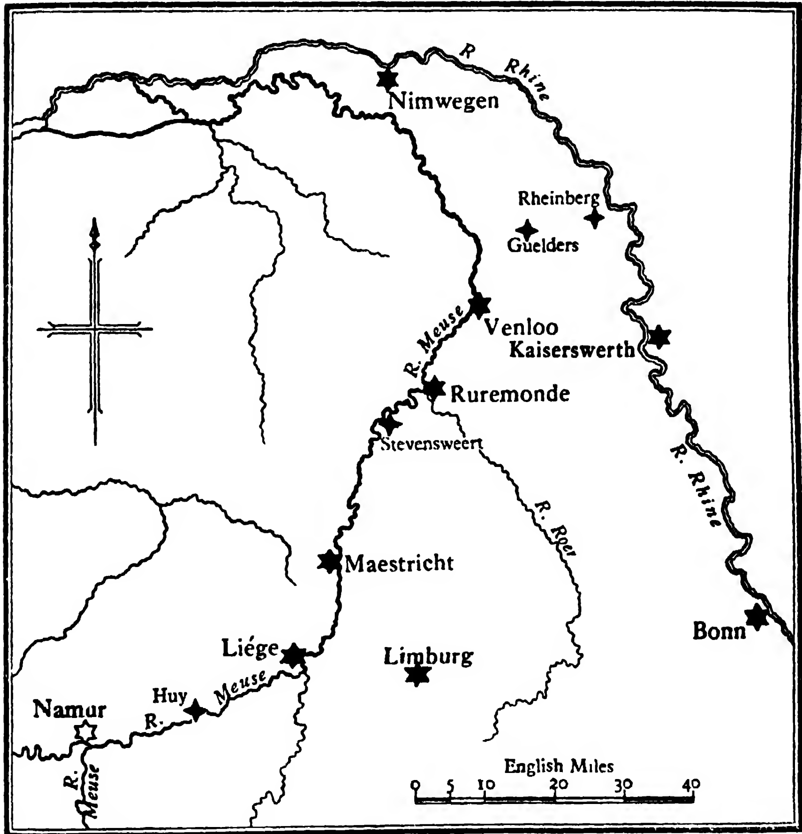
The Dutch were well satisfied with the campaign of 1703. They struck a medal with Queen Anne on the obverse, and on the reverse Marlborough on horseback being presented with three keys in a basin by a nymph adorned with a mural crown. The inscription was

truthful. "Victorious without slaughter, by the taking of Bonn, Huy, and Limburg."

We can imagine with what measured words and gestures and inward scorn and sorrow Marlborough received these local tributes. He never ceased to think of the war as a whole. To him the wide scene of strife and struggle, which spread through so many lands and involved the fortunes of almost all the nations, was but one. He saw himself only an actor in a single theatre without power, yet the presiding mind of the entire confederacy. These three fortresses were all that could be gained in the Netherlands during a year of definite superiority. Meanwhile what had happened in Germany? What ruin impended upon the Empire? And what chance, if the Empire fell, for the allied cause? While the sturdy, obstinate, short-sighted Dutch clapped their hands and struck their medals, Marlborough and Louis XIV were agreed in their measure of 1703. Versailles knew the year had been disastrous for the allies. France had run risks in the Low Countries in order to lay broad and deep the foundations of future conquests in Germany and Austria. In the Northern sphere they had not even lost Antwerp. Of what avail would Bonn, Huy, and Limburg be compared with the fall of Vienna and the destruction of the Hapsburg monarchy, for which all was now prepared? What would be the fate of the Dutch? What would be the value of the petty successes of an English adventurer, not even a prince, a mere Queen's favourite, the son of a country squire, when the large armies, which would force a separate peace upon the Empire in 1704, turned their victorious bayonets upon the Netherlands? Let him strut in his new dukedom; let his Queen be flattered with ill-founded praise; let them have their medals! The year was approaching when the long, profound designs and strategy of the Great King would bear their golden fruit—absolute victory of the French armies in the East. Then might the Republic and England beg for such terms as the magnanimity of Europe's master would accord.

Our General saw all this as clearly as his foes. It was with the deepest feelings of grief and fear for the public cause and a distaste for the part he had to play that he took leave of his Dutch admirers. He saw that this fleeting hour of "victory without slaughter" was probably the prelude to slaughter without victory. The attitude of the States-General and the Dutch oligarchy towards him was that of loving masters to an indispensable servant, without whom they would suffer disaster, but whom they nevertheless were determined

to control. "No battles" was still their rule; and how well it had answered! The illustrious Duke, the dauntless commander, the link of the Alliance, so skilful, so reasonable, so reassuring, was the man of all others they needed. If only they could keep his fighting propensities within bounds! And had they not succeeded during two



FORTRESSES OF THE MEUSE AND RHINE, END OF 1703

whole years? Had they not reconquered wide territories and important fortresses? Was not the hostile cannonade driven now far to the southward? Was not the Republic relieved from all danger of invasion? Not even could they hear the sound of guns. And might not all have been cast away "in three or four hours" if they had let him fight a battle—he who had never fought a battle in his life? They were equally grateful to him for what he had done, and for what they had compelled him not to do.

But he had tempted them so often, pressed them so hard, coaxed them so much, and his reasonings on the general war were so grave, that in their hearts were serious misgivings. Marlborough was plain with Heinsius and his colleagues. They were deeply conscious of the unspoken reproach which his sombre reception of their compliments conveyed. Perhaps he had been right after all. It would be awful if the Empire fell. How wonderful if the lines had been forced and the army of the two Marshals had been broken up in the field! Was this Ramillies position reallv so strong as their generals had declared? Thus the Dutch searched their hearts as they conducted their Deputy Captain-General to the quay.

Chapter Twelve

THE QUEEN'S COMMANDS

1703—WINTER

SINCE the days of Job no man's patience has been more tried than Marlborough's in 1703. The year had begun with the death of his only son. It was to end in a melancholy breach with his beloved wife. We have seen how his campaign had been spoilt by the Dutch, and the endless vexations which the "many-headed Republic" inflicted on its own servants. He returned to England heartily sick and weary of his command, and determined, whatever might happen, never to exercise it again under similar conditions. But the situation awaiting him at home was not less baffling and distasteful.

The violence of the High Tory attacks upon the conduct of the war put the Whig Party in an awkward plight. Although the Whigs were angry because they had no larger share of the offices, they had hitherto most loyally voted the supplies and sustained the policy of a great land war; but they expected results. Without victories and solid gains they saw themselves stultified and pilloried in the party fight. They were the war party. The Tories said it was *their* war. "Now there is being reaped in the Continental war," sneered the High Church Press, "the poisonous crops of a pernicious sowing. But none save the Whigs with their eagerness for a loan [a reference to the Whig connexions with City finance] and their ambitious King of Dutch descent have sowed the seeds." As the year closed under its succession of heavy blows—defeats in the field at Höchstädt and Spirbach, the loss of the famous fortified cities, Augsburg, Ratisbon, and above all Landau—as the French grip closed on the Upper Rhine and the Moselle, as the Empire broke down everywhere, as the Dutch would venture nothing, and Marlborough came home with little to show, the Whigs felt that as a party they must reconsider their position.

There was much to be said for their leaders' making a triple arrangement with Marlborough-Godolphin and the Dutch. Such a combination might plough its way through the less highly wrought

substances; but would Marlborough agree? Would or could the Dutch play the part assigned? The Lords of the Junto[1]—eminent, wealthy, powerful, uplifted above the crowd, masters of their party, the famous Ministers of King William's reign, nursing the wounds and insults they had received from the new régime; convinced that they had the secret of British greatness and British freedom in their keeping—coldly and massively reached a definite decision. There must be an end to the friendly relations they had preserved with Marlborough and Godolphin. The Whig Party—its strength in the Commons, its majority in the Lords, its landed magnates, its City financiers, its chapel-going folk of every class, the entire Dissenting interest, all their orators, pamphleteers, and newspapers—must turn their fire in a new direction. The whole Cabinet must be subjected to an unsparing Parliamentary and public onslaught. Even those Ministers who were most conciliatory in party matters, and were at the same time most resolute for the war, must be assailed equally with their more partisan and less patriotic colleagues. Marlborough must be accused of military incompetence. Marlborough and Godolphin must be charged jointly with the malevolent wasting of the subsidies and with a deliberate frustration of the projects of the war amounting to malignant treachery against the State. Language of this kind, it was felt, would outstrip all Tory abuse of Marlborough and Godolphin, and save the Whig Party from the reproach of having drawn the nation into a disastrous war. The war was right: the policy was good: King William was a true prophet; but his majestic designs were being cast away by corrupt, incapable, and malicious Ministers who fattened upon the cruel misfortunes of the times and feared lest even victory might put an end to their evil reign. This seemed the most promising line; and the whole Whig Party worked themselves up on it. Both parties therefore delivered their full blast of competitive calumny against Marlborough and Godolphin.

Accordingly Marlborough was assailed by the Whigs in speech and pamphlet as a supporter of the Occasional Conformity Bill, as a suspected Jacobite, and as a bigoted defender of the Prerogative of the Crown. They accused him—of all men—of acting defensively in Flanders, while wasting national strength upon useless naval expeditions. The Tory attack took exactly the opposite form on nearly all points. The Whigs were angry because he had not allowed

[1] Wharton, Somers, Halifax (formerly Charles Montagu, the ingenious Chancellor of the Exchequer), Orford (Admiral Russell), and Sunderland.

them a larger share of the offices: the Tories because he would not let them drive out what Whigs there were. But both parties agreed in abusing him for prolonging the war for his own benefit. The schism in the Cabinet had been growing more bitter all through the year, and now was notorious. Nottingham, the High Tory Secretary of State, backed by Jersey and Seymour, and Hedges harshly asserted their party view and party interest within the Government, and made no scruple of working with Rochester, and the mass of their party outside, against Godolphin and Marlborough. Not only did they oppose their policy, but they revealed their secrets, and sought to cast the blame for every misfortune and difficulty upon them. Opposed by conviction and party tenet to England's large share in the Continental war, they laboured to make it unpopular, and recked little if it were unsuccessful.

Many methods lay to their hands: of these, the first was to become strong critics of the Dutch. Every shortcoming of the Republic in its obligations as an ally—its tardiness in supplying ships or money; its underhand trading with the enemy; nay, its interference with Marlborough's military plans—was used to prove the unwisdom of being so deeply involved with so perverse and selfish a State. They did not care what ill-will was bred between the two countries. The sooner the Dutch were left to defend their own frontiers for themselves, the sooner could England resume her natural traditional Tory policy of seeking colonies, trade, and loose alliances by naval force and expeditions. Marlborough's ambition to lead armies in Europe, they suggested, clouded his judgment. No doubt, they hinted, it was most agreeable to him to receive his large salary from the Dutch, his perquisites and allowances from other allies, in addition to his pay as Captain-General; but why should England be dragged on to the mainland to waste her life and treasure and the splendid opportunities which offered overseas, to gratify the selfish desires of an individual? When Ministers set on foot such propaganda their followers could hardly be blamed for spreading it.

During the whole of the summer Godolphin had been worried out of his life by incessant attempts to isolate him from his own party and supplant him in the Queen's favour. He repeatedly appealed to Marlborough to allow him to resign. Marlborough, burning inwardly against the Dutch Deputies and generals, who thwarted him on every occasion, brought his plans to nought, and sullenly forbade the battle which would have cleared the air and established his authority, had, nevertheless, to bear all this in silence,

lest his enemies at home should use his complaints to mar the alliance. There is no doubt that the two "Great Ministers," with the weight of the war and the Grand Alliance on their hands, were now strained to breaking-point.

When they turned their gaze from the fierce feuds and intrigues of English and Dutch politics to the general war, it was only to encounter an even darker scene. For the new campaign Louis XIV was placing in the field eight separate armies, each commanded by a Marshal of France. Villeroy in Flanders, Tallard on the Rhine, Marsin with the Elector on the Danube, Vendôme in Piedmont, his brother, the Grand Prior, in Lombardy, La Feuillade in Savoy, Villars in the Cevennes, and the Duke of Berwick in Spain, were all preparing for a decisive effort in the coming year. Nor could there be much doubt where the fatal blow would fall. The Empire was the prey, and Vienna the prize. The contingents from different German states paid by the Sea Powers were still available for the defence of Southern Germany; but a further advance of the French and Bavarians would recall them all, in accordance with their subsidy treaties, for the local defence of their own home lands. The defeat of the Empire spelt the ruin of the confederacy and the final triumph of France. Meanwhile, as we have seen, the States-General had little thought beyond gathering the largest numbers of Dutch, auxiliary, and English troops for the defence (without battles) of the approaches to their own frontiers; and the English Parliament was moving powerfully towards leaving them to do this by themselves.

Marlborough realized with sombre conviction that the general defeat of the allies was approaching. The components of the confederacy would make separately what terms they could with the conqueror: a supreme Catholicizing monarchy of Gallican stamp would be erected upon the Continent by French bayonets; and Protestant England, little England with its six million people, with its trade and newly planted Empire, would be left alone to face the wrath and appetite of this enormous rival.

Since no coherent plan for common action could be devised; since even his sword-arm in the field was fettered; since his every movement was baulked by clinging hands and censured by shrill voices; since responsibility with odium, but without power, was all that was offered, and even that dreary situation grudged—why should not the Captain-General and the Lord Treasurer yield these awful burdens to those who coveted them so ravenously? Why not

retire from "these uneasy and troublesome broils"?[1] Why struggle further for the privilege of being involved in a vast catastrophe? Their would-be successors pressed avidly forward. Why not let them have their wish? He and Godolphin had done their best. Their consciences were clear. Each had his consolation: fruit-trees grew at Holywell, and horses ran at Newmarket. They could utter their warnings, and they could depart each to his abode. There is no doubt that both were sorely tempted. Public men under unfair stresses have often used such threats as a manœuvre for reviving their authority. There is every reason to believe that in this case both were sincere, and viewed in deep despondency their thankless and, as it seemed, hopeless duties. The word 'galley' became a favourite in their correspondence. *"We live the life of *galley slaves*," wrote Godolphin to Harley.[2] "It is much better *to row in the galleys* than have to do with such as are very selfish and misled by everybody who speaks to them," wrote Marlborough to Hedges in July.[3] It was not that Marlborough feared the task: the task was not confided. It was not that he felt unequal to it. Indeed, part of his trials consisted in seeing so clearly what ought to be done, and was prevented. Give him a reasonably free hand to direct the war-policy even only of the two countries of which he was Captain-General, even only for a year, and he felt sure he could transform the scene. But to be at once burdened, paralysed, and abused was more than could be endured.

But now Queen Anne struck her blow for the victory and the greatness of her country. She had reigned barely two years, but far behind her, it seemed, lay the "sunshine day," that brief space after the weight of Caliban had been lifted from her shoulders and before the weight of his cares was fastened there instead. She felt the distress and rising temper of those about her, the servants she knew best and trusted most. She resolved to draw them together around her in a new endeavour. Putting aside for the time being all her feelings about Whigs and Tories and her honest, inevitable differences with her bosom friend, she wrote Sarah a letter, magnificent and momentous, which ranks her with Queen Elizabeth and the greatest sovereigns of the English line.

WINDSOR
Saturday

The thoughts that both my dear Mrs Freeman and Mr Freeman

[1] Marlborough to Harley, October 11; Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, i, 56.
[2] Portland MSS. (undated). [3] Coxe, i, 273.

> seem to have of retiring gives me no small uneasiness, and therefore I must say something on that subject. It is no wonder at all that people in your posts should be weary of the world, who are so continually troubled with all the hurry and impertinencies of it; but give me leave to say you should a little consider your faithful friends and poor country, which must be ruined if ever you should put your melancholy thoughts in execution. As for your poor unfortunate faithful Morley, she could not bear it; for if ever you should forsake me, I would have nothing more to do with the world, but make another abdication; for what is a crown when the support of it is gone. I never will forsake your dear self, Mr Freeman, nor Mr Montgomery, but always be your constant faithful servant; and we four must never part, till death mows us down with his impartial hand.[1]

It was the Cockpit against the world.

Sarah was evidently the channel by which the exasperation of the General and the miseries of the Treasurer were brought home to the Queen. The Queen abandoned none of her convictions, but by writing such a letter she made it plain to her servants that she made common cause with them, and would do all that was necessary to help them, even though much was contrary to her personal views. She must have been very weary of her interminable discussions with Sarah upon the relative demerits of the Tories and Whigs. Her placid, unalterable Tory prejudice bore unmoved for months and years the vivacious, shrewd, persuasive, or often rasping assaults of one who was still her dearest friend. But now, when the glory of England was at stake, she subordinated her party politics and her side of the argument with Sarah to the supreme need. Her magnanimity and her sense of proportion expressed the genius of the English race in adversity.

Sarah's letters throughout the year give no sign of her appreci-

[1] This letter bears only the day of the week, and has usually been assigned to early June (*cf.* Coxe, i, 273–4). But the postscript, hitherto unpublished, makes it plain that it was written in the autumn, and, we think, late in October, just before Marlborough returned home:

Sunday

★"I am very sorry dear Lady Sunderland has got so great a cold, and extreme glad you persuaded her not to come hither *for ye sharpness of ye air now* yt she is not well and ye change of beds would have made her worse. She need have no scruples about her going to Althrope before she comes hither, and I hope she will not think I can be so unreasonable as to take it ill. I am very sorry dear Mrs Freeman thinks it necessary to make any excuse to her poor unfortunate faithful Morley for ye length of your letter, and ye concern you were in for dear Lady Sunderland. I'm sure nobody can have a more tender feeling for you in everything than I have, particularly on these occasions. I pray God bless you, and preserve you from all manner of misfortunes." (Blenheim MSS.)

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ating the nobility of the Queen's gesture. Imbued with her conviction that only in the Whigs and in modernism could a sure basis for war and politics be found, she pursued her advocacy. We cannot trace even a dint to mark the impact of this great appeal. But Marlborough was moved in every fibre of his being. Under the captaincy of his mind and the smooth surface of his manners his soul flamed within him. He would endure all things and dare all things: he would not despair: he would not lose patience: he would find a way to make the Queen victorious, or perish in the attempt.

It was November 10 before he got home, and his first few days were occupied at Windsor in the ceremonies preceding the expedition of the Archduke Charles, now proclaimed King of Spain, to invade through Portugal the kingdom which he claimed. Compliments, jewels, and valedictions having passed, the Archduke embarked at Portsmouth on board the *Royal Catherine*, with a fleet of battleships and transports, on his unpromising adventure; and Marlborough turned to face the political situation.

With regard to the command of the armies the Whigs had a definite plan. Marlborough must be removed. The country could run such risks no longer. Moreover, his resolve never to take the field again under the Dutch restrictions of the 1703 campaign was widely known. Through King William's old friend Portland the Whig leaders discussed with the Grand Pensionary whether the supreme command might not be transferred to the Elector of Hanover, the lawful heir to the English throne. Thus the Prince who was to preserve the Protestant succession and restore the Whig supremacy would be at the head of the armies, leading the English troops, and ready, should the Queen's health fail, to claim his Parliamentary rights with all the advantages of armed force. It was hoped that Marlborough would consent to advise the proposed new Commander-in-Chief. This scheme was duly brought before him. Through Sarah and Sunderland, wife and son-in-law, he had contact with the Junto and must have received early and accurate accounts of their designs. To the astonishment of every one in the secret Whig circles, Marlborough agreed at once to the plan. He declared himself ready as commander of the English Army to serve under the command of the Elector, and to use his best endeavours. "Marlborough himself," wrote Portland to Heinsius, "seems to be *very strongly* drawn to this plan, and will be relieved and contented to be under the Elector's orders."

There is scarcely any doubt that Marlborough meant what he said.

Not only was he sickened of his treatment by the Dutch and wearied by the clatter of eloquent malice directed upon him in England, but also he saw a way of procuring a better direction of the war as chief of the staff under a royal head than as titular commander. He lent himself fully and frankly to the scheme. That it failed was no fault of his; and here again we see the unfathomable mystery which Marlborough's character presents. Did he know all the time that the Dutch would never agree to the transference of the command to so considerable a prince of the German Empire who himself provided a substantial mercenary contingent? Was he always sure that this Whig proposal would be choked in the inundations of Dutch obstinacy? There is no telling. We think that he had reached a point in human endurance when he did not care what happened to his own career; that at this moment ambition was utterly quenched. He would serve the Queen wherever it would help most.

The Dutch executive were staggered at this development. They had conceived themselves throughout the year in imminent danger of a widespread domestic revolt against their authority and the continuance of the war. They knew their generals hated Marlborough. All their experts said his notions of war were unprofessional and unsound. But the more the men who knew him thought about losing him the less they liked it. And how would they enjoy this German prince at the head of their armies? So they took no decision. Once again their natural obstructiveness stood them in good stead. They let the weeks slip by, and the campaign of 1704 drew near in its appalling panoply.

The winter afforded a tense example of English party and Parliamentary struggles in the midst of European storm. For all the Captain-General's suave demeanour, Nottingham and his Tory colleagues knew what he thought of them. They resolved to marshal all the Tory forces and launch an offensive which would break up the Government. Well did they know, and Marlborough recognize, the weapon in their hand. On November 23 they caused, or connived at, the announcement in the *Gazette* of the impending introduction of another Occasional Conformity Bill. Godolphin and Marlborough learned of this intention only when they read it in the official Government publication, and two days later Mr Bromley, a private Member, but leader of the Churchmen in the House of Commons, presented the Bill under what every one might suppose to be Ministerial countenance. It was immediately carried by a large majority of Tories, supported by Non-jurors and Jacobite members.

In that dark hour of the war this measure drove, and was meant to drive, a wedge which would split the Cabinet, sunder the parties, and embroil the two Houses. It was also calculated to estrange Marlborough and Godolphin from their party and Parliamentary majority, and at the same time to excite the High Church sentiments of the Queen and make mischief between her and Sarah's open-mouthed Whiggery. The Tory Ministers resolved to force an issue at all points, and, believing themselves capable of gaining the control of the State and of the war, with open insolence to their colleagues encouraged their followers and partisans. The Whigs, the Nonconformists, and the money-power of the City were roused by fear to fury. The challenge was plain to all: a trial of strength was opened. It must be remembered that, though Marlborough was recognized at this time as a skilful commander who could manœuvre the French and take fortresses and recover territory in a manner unknown under King William, he had never been allowed to fight a battle, and had no historic achievement to set against the sneer that he was only "a general of favour." There was no surpassing prestige to subdue faction. As for the safety and interest of the State, the Tories, with a complete scheme of war and policy in which they were thoroughly drilled, conceived themselves well able to judge of that.

But they could not know what had passed between the Queen and her trusted friends; nor how she had determined to suppress her personal feelings in what she deemed a national interest. The second Occasional Conformity Bill found her in a very different mood from the first. Then she had been an enthusiast for the measure. Now she thought it unseasonable, although no doubt right in itself. The royal speech, drafted by Marlborough and Godolphin, but cordially assented to by the Queen, had expressed at the opening of the session her earnest desire "of seeing all my subjects in perfect peace and union among themselves," and urged concentration upon the war peril. She was not blind to the factious calculations which inspired the aggressive measure, and was alarmed by the passions which it roused among her subjects and in her most intimate circle. She was torn between her deepest religious and political convictions and her trusted friends to whom she had pledged herself. In a letter to Sarah she reveals the stresses through which she passed. This time she would not compel her husband to vote against his own heart. She wrote:

> To ease your mind I must tell you that Mr Bromley will be disappointed; for the prince does not intend to go to the House when

> the bill of occasional conformity is brought in. But at the same time that I think him very much in the right not to vote in it, I shall not have the worse opinion of any of the lords that are for it; for though I should have been very glad it had not been brought into the house of commons, because I would not have had any pretence given for quarrelling, I cannot help thinking, now 'tis as good as passed there, it will be better for the service to have it pass the house of lords too. I must own to you that I never cared to mention anything on this subject to you, because I knew you would not be of my mind; but since you have given me this occasion, I cannot forbear saying that I see nothing like persecution in this bill. You may think it is a notion lord Nottingham has put into my head, but upon my word it is my own thought.[1]

It is impossible to have a clearer revelation of her mind, of the relations of the two friends, and of the severity of the crisis.

Marlborough and Godolphin repeated their tactics of the year before, but with much more effrontery. They left no stone unturned to procure the rejection of the Bill. They threw all their influence—and it was weighty and far-reaching—against it. But at the same time they voted for it, and when it was rejected they signed the protest of twenty-three Tory peers against its rejection. Thus malice was met by guile, and faction baffled by deceit. And this was no more than was right and necessary for the public safety and the peace of the realm.

We may imagine the condition of the Cabinet on the morrow of the Bill's defeat. The Ministers faced each other across the council-table with mutual scorn. Both sides understood every move in the game. The rage and disappointment of the Tory Party were extreme. They accused Marlborough and Godolphin of having tricked them by double-dealing and hypocrisy, and forgot who had compassed the destruction of colleagues and the downfall of much else besides. They even extended their reproaches to the Queen in rhymes and pamphlets. They classed her with King William. They raised the cry "The Church in danger." This at least would wring her heart. But here they overreached themselves. Anne, who loved the Church so dearly, was indignant that it could be thought in danger under her rule. She reacted strongly in the opposite direction. She was filled with resentment against the Tories, and prepared herself thenceforward for the political changes which were obviously imperative to the cohesion of the Government.

[1] *Conduct*, p. 166.

Marlborough's breach with Nottingham had begun in the spring of the year.[1] He had written to Godolphin on April 6:

If Lord Nottingham continues being so impertinent as to join with Sir Edward Seymour and others to obstruct business, I think it were much better to be plain with him, than to suffer him to go on in that way; for by that he will be much abler to do mischief than if he were out; and I am very much mistaken if he will care to part with his place.

Again, on June 11:

I am very sensible by a letter I have received from Lord Nottingham that there will be an ill use made this winter of the Dutch ships coming so late. As much as I hear of the behaviour of Lord Nottingham, if there were anybody proper to be put in his place, he could do less hurt to the business of the queen if he were out than where he now is.

And on June 14:

. . . There is nothing more certain than what you say, that either of the parties would be tyrants if they were let alone; and I am afraid it is as true that it will be very hard for the queen to prevent it. I think nothing should be omitted to do justice, and then God's will be done. What you say of lord Nottingham concerning the park is very scandalous, but very natural to that person. I wish with all my heart the queen were rid of him, so that she had a good man in his place, which I am afraid is pretty difficult.

And to Sarah, from the same camp at Hanef:

. . . Some of them might, in my opinion, be removed, as 15 [Lord Jersey] and 42 [Lord Nottingham]; but who is there fit for their places? I do protest before God I know of none. I am of your mind that if the queen spoke to lord Rochester in the manner you mention in your letter, I believe it would make him very cautious; not that I think it would make him honest, but he would be afraid. The conversation that was between lord Rochester and the Speaker [Harley] is no doubt the language that he entertains the whole party with; and if they can once be strong enough to declare which way the war shall be managed, they may ruin England and Holland at their pleasure, and I am afraid may do it in such a manner as may not at first be unpopular; so that the people may be undone before they can see it. I can't say a word for the excusing the Dutch for the backwardness of their sea preparations this year; but if that, or anything else, should produce a coldness between England and Holland, France would then gain their point, which I hope in God I shall never live to see; for our poor

[1] The following letters are in Coxe, i, 270–280.

country would then be the miserablest part of all Christendom; for we should not only lose our liberty, but our religion also must be forced, and those gentlemen that would be helping to this would then be as miserable as others; for the French, when they are the masters, make no distinctions.

He was equally indignant with Nottingham's associates. "We are bound," he wrote to Sarah on June 14, "not to wish for anybody's death, but if 14 [Sir Edward Seymour] should die, I am convinced it would be no great loss to the queen nor the nation." Of Hedges he wrote to Godolphin on July 22:

. . . If you should oblige him in this and in almost everything he asks (if his temper be what I am told it is), the queen must expect that he will, underhand, endeavour to obstruct everything, which I am very sorry for, but I am afraid it is true.

On the other hand, he repulsed with the nearest approach to severity that occurs in any of his letters to Sarah her suggestion of making overtures to the Whigs, and especially to his son-in-law Sunderland:

ALDERBEESTEN
Oct. 11, 1703

I see by this last letter that you have mistaken my meaning in some of my letters; for though I may have complained of some you call your friends, yet it never entered into my thoughts that they should be spoke to in order to have a better thought of me; for I know they would be as unreasonable as the others in their expectations, if I should seek their friendship: for all parties are alike. And as I have taken my resolution of never doing any hardship to any man whatsoever, I shall by it have a quiet in my own mind; not valuing nor desiring to be a favourite to either of them. For, in the humour I am now in, and that I hope in God I shall ever be of, I think both parties unreasonable and unjust. I am very sensible of several errors I have committed: but I must not endeavour to mend them by running into greater: so that I shall make complaints to neither, but endeavour to recommend myself to the world by my sincere intentions of governing all my actions by what I shall think is for the interest of my queen and country. I hope in God this will agree with what you desire, and then I can have no uneasiness.

Harley, who as Speaker and in a sense the Government Chief Whip lay so much in the centre of the House of Commons, had explained the almost universal tide of opinion flowing against the Continental war. Even Godolphin was affected by it. Marlborough wrote, "If both parties agree that the war must not be offensive in

this country, I am very much afraid the Dutch will not think themselves very safe in our friendship." By this characteristic understatement he meant that if the English troops were withdrawn from the Continent the Dutch would make a separate peace with France.

> However, I cannot but be much concerned; for if this country is ruined, we are undone, and then 10 [Sir Charles Hedges] and his friends may succeed, which otherwise is next to impossible. There are a thousand reasons for preserving our friendship with the Dutch; for as we save them, so they must preserve us from the arbitrary power of 19 [the Pretender] and 1 [Middleton] which must be entirely governed by 3 [Louis XIV].
>
> May God preserve me and my dearest love from seeing this come to pass; but if we should quarrel with 24 [the Dutch] I fear it might happen.

He sent a curt message to his son-in-law Sunderland, who as a member of the Whig Junto had proffered the support of the party in return for a full share in the Government.

> . . . Tell Lord Sunderland that I thank him for his letter, and that I hope I shall always continue in the humour I am now in, that is, to be governed by neither party, but to do what I think is best for England, by which I shall disoblige both parties. But as long as I have quiet in my own mind, I shall not care; for as I had rather be without employments than have them, I shall need none of their protection.

It had for some time been plain that the Government must be reconstructed before the new campaign began. This must have been the principal topic at the regular meetings which now took place at least twice a week between Marlborough, Godolphin, and Harley. The episode of the Occasional Conformity Bill only emphasized the need. Nottingham and the High Tories could not be allowed to continue their attack upon the Administration from some of the highest positions inside its structure. It seemed likely that the Queen would be distressed by parting from so eminent and experienced a statesman, whose personal character and morals she respected, whose outlook on politics and religion she largely shared. If the dismissal or resignation of Nottingham could be procured, the whole basis of the Government would have to be changed. Mr Speaker Harley was the only man who could fill the gap. He commanded the goodwill of a large number of the moderate members of both parties, and his influence upon the House of Commons

was incomparable. It seemed feasible, if the Queen would consent, to break with the Tory Highflyers in the Council and in Parliament, and form a Government of the centre, which it would be easier for the Whigs to support. On this basis, once the supplies had been voted and Parliament had risen, the war might be carried on during the coming year. No steps could, however, be taken yet. Nottingham's position was too strong to be imprudently assailed, and Harley, who was thoroughly at home in the House of Commons, was by no means eager to enter a different and to him novel circle as Secretary of State. The characteristics of a new Administration were, however, defined in the minds of this triumvirate, whose consultation and concord formed what was virtually an inner Cabinet.

The relations between England and Scotland were moving, with most other great affairs, towards a climax. We have seen how Marlborough had found it necessary to quarter all the English troops for the winter "so that they might be embarked in twenty-four hours," and how he had arranged before leaving The Hague that "if there should be occasion the Queen might have what number of troops she pleases." These precautions were directed against a French invasion of Scotland, or a hostile declaration by Scotland, or a revolt, or a combination of these calamities. The general election in Scotland in the summer of 1703 had resulted in the success of the Opposition parties. The temper of this free Parliament, the first since the accession of William III, manifested itself in three Acts. The first was an Act which forbade any future sovereign to declare war without the consent of the Scottish Parliament. This meant that if Queen Anne should die, Scotland could withdraw from the war. The second Act, for securing the Protestant religion, affirmed the Presbyterian establishment, and denied even toleration to Episcopalians. To both these measures Anne had been forced to give a reluctant assent. But the third, the Act of Security, proclaimed the probable approaching severance of the Crowns. Its most significant clause provided

> that when Queen Anne died the Scots Parliament might choose her successor, who was to be of the Royal line and a Protestant, *but who should not be the same person as the English successor unless England had previously satisfied Scotland as to her conditions of government and of complete freedom and equality of trade.*

This wild session had ended in September, and before the Edinburgh Parliament met again the Queen's Government had lost

every vestige of control over it. The position at the beginning of 1704 was that the Scots were planning to compel the Queen to sign the Act of Security and a Militia Act to create a Scottish army, by tacking them to the Money Acts required for the prosecution of the war. These courses had still some way to run, but it seemed probable that if they were persisted in the outcome would be a civil war in which Scotland would become the ally of France. This was a hideous prospect.

The last domestic problem was the recruitment. All voluntary methods had been exhausted, and the treaty strength of the forces in the field could only be maintained by some form of compulsion. This was already customary for the Navy. Parliament and the naval ports were used to the press-gang. Tories and Whigs alike were for the Navy. It was the defence of the island, and no menace to its constitutional rights. But compulsion for the Army touched all the most sensitive spots in the body politic. The want of logic which had marked John Hampden's resistance to the exaction of Ship Money from counties that did not border on the sea had deep roots in national life. The seizure of men to be soldiers against their will seemed to challenge English liberty in a manner quite different from the seizure of men to be sailors, which, of course, was only what had to be done in time of war. Still, the strength of the armies had to be maintained, and after endless wire-pullings and Parliamentary management the necessary authority was at length obtained by the split Cabinet from the faction-ridden Parliament. The solution adopted was simple. The able-bodied unemployed were caught wherever they could be found and, to use a familiar modern term, "deemed to be enlisted" in the Army. But many of those who had voted for the measure did not scruple to turn its unpopularity against the Government and against the war which they had promised to support.

The increasing gravity of events at home, and the imminent resumption of the war along all its fronts, weighed heavily upon every one who was not diverted by the excitement of party politics. Harley not only was the best judge of House of Commons opinion but took great pains to inform himself of public feeling throughout the country. He had a number of agents of remarkable quality and discernment, who prowled to and fro in the land from Cornwall to Scotland sending him their reports. Daniel Defoe was one of these; Paterson was another. It is in one of Paterson's letters that we find the best epitome of the situation:

> The face of affairs both at home and abroad requires another kind of resolution and vigour than, perhaps, ever yet appeared in the councils. *Two or three choice men should show another sort of courage and resolution than you and they have done yet in this reign.*[1]

It was in this temper that Marlborough now revolved the strategic problems of 1704.

[1] Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 71.

Chapter Thirteen

THE GENESIS OF BLENHEIM

1704—SPRING

IN a war involving nearly the whole world it was natural that each campaign should offer to both sides a wide choice of plans, for and against any one of which there was much to be said. Each plan had to be weighed not only on its own merits, but in relation to all the others in the general setting of the war. The wonderful results which followed Marlborough's march to the Danube have led historians and biographers to hail the idea as if it were in itself an inspiration of genius. In fact, however, it was only one of the more daring moves upon the board which must have been present in the minds of all the chief authorities carrying on the war, and the only questions open about it were: Was it the best, and could it be done? But these were the riddles of the Sphinx.

The Empire had been crying for help throughout the whole of 1703, and as its plight grew worse it cried the louder. Wratislaw was the principal mouthpiece of the appeal. In him the Emperor had an agent of tireless activity and the highest persuasiveness and tact. He knew the desperate straits to which the Empire was reduced; he had the whole picture of the war in his mind; he saw deep into the politics of London and The Hague, and he had the confidence of Marlborough and Heinsius. In his importunity he moved to and fro between all the Courts and headquarters of the confederates emphasizing the peril of the collapse of the Hapsburgs and its imminence, and begging for troops and money. He further urged that, to avert the defeat and break-up of the alliance, the main effort of the allies in 1704 must be made outside the Netherlands. A successful offensive upon the Moselle by an Anglo-Dutch army would have advantages. It would set free the Imperial forces under the Margrave of Baden to make head against the Elector of Bavaria. An offensive on the Upper Rhine would be better; for then the allied armies would be nearer together and able to help one another more. But most of all he pressed for the gathering together of all available troops to strike down the Elector and close

the awful gap which exposed the heart of the Empire. All this was the natural, obvious point of view for the Emperor's representative to take. But Wratislaw rendered fine service to his master in pressing upon Marlborough the boldest course of all, in choosing the occasions of his advocacy, in preserving the best contacts, and in smoothing away difficulties and misunderstandings. If Eugene, now head of the War Council in Vienna, did not ask Marlborough to come to Bavaria with an army, it was not because he did not desire it above all things; but because he thought it was beyond hope. Wratislaw, in personal relation with Marlborough, and comprehending the pressures to which he was subjected, did not despair. Nor did he risk anything by asking for the best: it might be the surest way of getting at least the second-best.

As early as February 1703 the Imperial Envoy had urged upon Marlborough the dispatch of an auxiliary corps to meet the Bavarian danger. Marlborough did not oppose this, but, being then absorbed in "the great design" against Antwerp and Ostend, and hoping for a decisive battle in Flanders or Brabant, he only induced the States General to spare twelve Dutch battalions.

The command of this not inconsiderable detachment was entrusted to a Dutch officer who plays a part in our story. Lieutenant-General van Goor was a soldier of whom Marlborough had formed a very good opinion and with whom he had established intimate relations. Goor quarrelled with the Margrave. He condemned his conduct of the campaign of 1703. He had criticized his long, futile marches, and the military disasters which had resulted from them seemed to justify his complaints. Goor's criticisms were shared by many of the higher allied officers in the Imperial Army. On the other hand, the Margrave protested to the Emperor against the indiscipline of his generals, and singled out the Dutch and Saxon officers for special censure. He mentioned that they considered their comfort to such a degree that "on the march they appeared in nightshirts."[1] However this may be—and it certainly requires some explanation—the tension between Goor and the Margrave was to reach a climax on November 12. The Margrave ordered Goor to supply from the Dutch contingent a garrison for some small place. Goor displayed the instructions of the States-General that the Dutch troops were not to be split up into small parties. When the Dutchman persisted in his refusal the Margrave, as Imperial commander, had his sword

[1] P. Röder von Diersburg, *Kriegs- und Staats-schriften des Markgrafen Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden* (two vols., 1850), i, 270 *et seq.*

demanded of him, and placed him under arrest. It is not difficult to guess how the Dutch received this information. They suggested that the Margrave should send General Goor back to Holland, not forgetting *to send his twelve battalions with him.* Here were to be additional complications.

Meanwhile, in August, Wratislaw wrote again to Marlborough, making the suggestion that he should meet Eugene at The Hague in December and assert his authority over the Dutch. This imprudent procedure was deftly put aside by the Duke, who confined his reply to expressing his fear that Eugene would not be able to get to The Hague, and his hope that Wratislaw would be there himself.[1] When Marlborough, at the close of the campaign, went to meet the Archduke Charles at Düsseldorf, Wratislaw was on the spot. He laid his case before Marlborough, who listened with his usual attention, conversed agreeably, but said nothing. Proceeding to The Hague, the Envoy pleaded with the Pensionary. Heinsius, knowing too well what his countrymen would feel, turned the subject. For the moment the question dropped, and the Parliamentary conflicts which filled the season when the armies were in winter quarters absorbed all attention.

Marlborough was, of course, pondering how he would fight his campaign of 1704, if, indeed, he were called upon to do so. He had come home in November determined that he would not repeat his odious experiences of the late campaign in the Netherlands. Upon this his decision was final. If he were to command it must be upon the Moselle or the Upper Rhine, and the Dutch must give him proper control of the army. He had already attempted to make definite preparations for this end. His decision to quarter the corps of the Prince of Hesse-Cassel upon the Moselle for the winter, and for that purpose to capture Trarbach and Trèves, had been frustrated by that Prince's defeat at Spirbach when he was diverted to the relief of Landau. But Marlborough's design for the first stage of the campaign of 1704 is inherent in this movement.

Whether he was, at this time, weighing the chances of a campaign on the Danube can never be known. If he harboured such ideas, he would probably have concealed them from Wratislaw, for many conditions would have to be exacted from the Emperor before it would be worth while to entertain so adventurous a scheme. It was for Wratislaw to ask and for Marlborough to give. It was easy to

[1] Wratislaw to Marlborough, August 1, 1703; Marlborough to Wratislaw, August 20 1703 (Blenheim MSS.).

ask and hard to give, and this was certainly not a time for him to commit himself, even if it were in his power. He conferred with Wratislaw at the end of January on the eve of a visit to The Hague to discuss the war plans for the year with the Dutch. Marlborough then said, "It is my intention to induce the States-General to decide upon a siege of Landau, or a diversion on the Moselle. I should be very glad to march there myself, but as it is difficult to move the Dutch to a defensive, which would at the same time be an offensive, I should be able to get at most only 45 battalions and some 60 squadrons for that purpose. Should I take Landau I would supply the Margrave of Baden with as many troops as possible so as to enable him to overthrow the Elector of Bavaria."[1] He authorized Wratislaw to report this statement both to the Margrave and to Prince Eugene, as well as to the Emperor. He strictly enjoined that nothing should be said to the Dutch; he would deal with them himself.

There were three important points in this statement. He was resolved, first, to fight outside the Netherlands; secondly, to have an independent army (for the numbers he specified corresponded exactly to the troops in English pay); and, thirdly, he sought the overthrow of the Elector Max Emmanuel. Of these the second is the most remarkable. The Anglo-Dutch forces had been so long intermingled under King William and in the present war that the separation of those paid by the Queen from those paid by the States-General would be a startling departure from the ingrained habits of the two allies. Marlborough had been forced to this decision by the treatment we have described, which rendered military success impossible. He must have a separate army under his own orders, and he would perhaps go himself as far as Landau. More than that could not then, and cannot now, be said of his intentions up to this time.

The Duke started for The Hague in very severe weather on January 26. The winter had been so bitter and tempestuous that his yacht was the first vessel which "for six weeks had ventured to navigate the German Sea."[2] He landed at Rotterdam three days later. He found opinion and affairs equally unpromising. There was great anxiety about the peril to the Emperor and the Empire, combined with an obstinate helplessness to take any steps to avert it. Marshal Villeroy was said to be expected in Brussels before the end of February. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin:

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch of January 29, 1704; Klopp, xi, 92.

[2] Coxe, i, 304.

> If he should come I hope he will not stay; for our magazines will not be ready till the beginning of April, before which time these people have made me promise to be back, so that my stay in England is likely not to be worth the crossing the seas twice. But my desire of being with you and Lady Marlborough is such that I would come, although I were to stay but a day.[1]

The financial position of the Republic was precarious. No receipts at all had come from two out of the seven provinces. All the subsidies to the German auxiliaries, as well as that newly promised to Savoy, were in arrear. The bulk of the war expenditure for the year could only be met by borrowing under adverse conditions. A wave of pessimism and pacifism was sweeping across all classes. There was a deep-seated fear in the States-General of the consequences of sending any large detachments of troops away from the Netherlands. This fear did not arise only from nervousness about their frontiers. There was a domestic cause. The party schism which divided the provinces and towns of the Republic was at this time most menacing. The memory of the two de Witts' being torn to pieces by a mob maddened by their country's danger was still recent and vivid in all minds. The dispatch of any large body of troops to Germany might be the signal for a panic and a popular uprising. The stability no less than the defence of the Republic seemed to the dominant party in the States-General to require at once the maintenance of the largest armies, and their retention at home. Against such dangerous timidity Heinsius seemed powerless.

We must suppose that by this time Marlborough had examined in very considerable detail the possibilities and methods of carrying the war to the Moselle, to the Upper Rhine, or to the Danube, and that the essential features of all these three plans were marshalled in his mind. The unfavourable atmosphere at The Hague enjoined upon him the utmost reserve. He made his opinion known that no lasting successes against France were to be gained in Brabant and Flanders, but he did not commit himself to any alternative, not even, at this stage, to an emphatic advocacy of the Moselle. He so comported himself as to leave it to the Dutch themselves to make the suggestion. He took, however, a second definite step towards a concentration upon the Moselle. He ordered the generals of the Hanoverian and Cellian troops in the joint pay of the Sea Powers, Bülow and Somerfeldt, who stood between the Elector of Bavaria and Nuremberg, to move towards the Moselle. When Count Goes

[1] February, 8/19; Coxe, i, 306.

protested that Nuremberg would be exposed, Marlborough shrugged his shoulders and answered, "But the diversion on the Moselle has been wanted on behalf of the Emperor, and, as you tell me, it is still wanted. To run to extinguish the fire everywhere at once is impossible. Emperor and Empire must themselves make every effort in their power: otherwise, I can see no result."[1] It is impossible to fathom the working of his mind from his manipulation of the different factors. Whether he intended by this move to bring matters to a head, or whether his schemes as yet went no farther than the Moselle, cannot be stated. At any rate, this movement increased the alarm, and should spur the efforts, of the Empire and of the German princes, and it presented the idea of a campaign on the Moselle to the Dutch in the agreeable form of some of their troops actually coming nearer home.

Marlborough left The Hague for his brief return to England seriously concerned by all that he learned there. He wrote to Godolphin:

> I shall be sure to take the first wind that will carry me to sea, for I am very impatient to be with you, having finished everything as far as this country is capable, for nobody here has power to conclude anything; *but Providence makes the wheel go round*, and I hope the blessing of God will make us succeed much better than we can propose to ourselves.[2]

And to Sarah (February 20 or 21):

> For this campaign I see so very ill a prospect that I am extremely out of heart. But God's will be done; and I must be for this year very uneasy, for in all the other campaigns I had an opinion of being able to do something for the common cause; but in this I have no other hopes than that some lucky accident may enable me to do good.[3]

This was the style in which he always wrote before his greatest adventures. The same note of gloom, almost of despair, also preceded both Ramillies and Oudenarde. Oddly enough, we usually find him in a sanguine mood at the beginning of his least successful campaigns. The explanation was that after any great success he saw the next move, and it filled his mind; but at the same time the allied states, feeling all danger past, relaxed their exertions and let loyalty slip. When a new crisis arose, he had a freer hand to deal with a worsened situation.

"If this wind continues," he ended his letter, "I hope the king

[1] Dispatch of Count Goes, February 22. [2] Coxe, i, 306. [3] *Loc. cit.*

of Spain will make use of it, and that I shall have the happiness of being with you." The wind held, and he embarked on the 22nd with the first tide. But the yacht ran aground and was stranded by the ebb. He leapt into a small boat and reached the Brill, where he went on board a frigate, the *Dolphin*, and sailed for home. He must have made a fine passage, for he landed at Gravesend about eight the following night and reached London early the day after.

The German princes, headed by the Elector Palatine, now joined their appeals for the succour of Germany to those of the Emperor. Marlborough's orders to the Hanoverian and Cellian troops to descend the Rhine tortured the Empire. The Dutch, deaf to German solicitations, and angered by the Margrave's treatment of General Goor, had finally sent an imperative order to that officer to bring his troops back to Coblenz by April 15, and seemed inclined to suggest that his force was all that could be spared outside the Netherlands, and then only for the Moselle. Marlborough was supplicated by Wratislaw, aided by Count Lescheraine from the Elector Palatine, to permit the Hanoverians and Cellians to delay their withdrawal. At first, on February 29, he was obdurate. He had, he said, already given the orders for their march. In answer to Wratislaw's demand for reconsideration the most he would say was, "I do not reject it: time will show." A fortnight later he consented to suspend the order provided the Dutch would agree.

Meanwhile Wratislaw continued almost daily his entreaties to Marlborough to "come to the aid of the distressed German fatherland"; and more and more he urged that he should come in person. The astute Ambassador seems to have felt that here he was pressing the Captain-General where he wanted to be pressed. He gave important assurances that if Marlborough would come, the Emperor would "meet all his wishes." The Margrave of Baden and the other Imperial commanders would defer to his judgment. The whole authority of the Imperial Crown would be cast against the Elector of Bavaria. His destruction would be the sole object of the campaign. On the other hand, he declared that if the Commander-in-Chief allowed the large English army to be used only to guard the Dutch frontier, while the Emperor, the faithful ally of England, was overwhelmed by superior force, the fortunes of the Empire would not fall alone, but would in their collapse bring down the whole. And if Marlborough, out of deference to the Dutch, confined within the narrow ambit of their supposititious patriotism, failed to rise to the occasion, on his head before Europe and the English Parliament

would the blame fall. Thus Wratislaw wrestled with Marlborough during the whole of March, and thus Marlborough, continually obtaining conditions, consented to be wooed.

He had serious need to explore the ground thoroughly. The politics of the German princes made a strange embroidery of half-friendships and hungry ambitions. We have described the motives and conditions which had induced the so-called 'treason' of Max Emmanuel; but what was the position of Prince Louis of Baden, the commander-in-chief of the Emperor? He too was a sovereign prince. Bavaria was his near neighbour. He was united to its Elector by personal friendship. The triumph of the French armies which might well be expected would raise Max Emmanuel to the Imperial throne. How then would the Margrave of Baden stand if he had been his chief and most active opponent in the field? Such suspicions might prove unfounded; but the tendencies from which they arose could not be ignored. Before Marlborough could hazard the Queen's army in the depths of Germany, he must be as sure as possible that he would not be obstructed or even betrayed by the general with whom he was to act.

The attitude of Frederick I also deserved deep study. The new Prussian Kingdom was voracious. If Max Emmanuel could win Swabia and much else at the hands of victorious France, could not Prussia obtain Franconia with its fertile plains of Nuremberg from the same unfortunate event? Could not a side deal be made between the King of Prussia and the Elector of Bavaria, whereby if Swabia were added to Bavaria Prussia should take Franconia? Was there not, then, an underlying common interest between the Prussian King and the recreant Elector? There were plenty of brave troops to be had from Prussia at a price in gold and territory. By the treaty in which the Emperor had recognized his new kingship Frederick I was bound to provide eight thousand men for the Grand Alliance. Now that Franconia was menaced by the advance of the Franco-Bavarian army towards Nördlingen and Nuremberg, the Prussian King offered nearly double this quota. As before the campaign of 1703 he had been willing to send eighteen thousand Prussians to join the Anglo-Dutch army on the Meuse or the Moselle *provided they constituted an independent command*, so now he offered fifteen thousand men to protect Franconia on the same condition. The Dutch—not, we may be sure, without weighty reasons—had declined his former offer. The Circle of Franconia now were similarly shy of grasping the strong-rescuing claw; and

the Emperor, who shared their misgivings, had replied with suitable gratitude that eight thousand men would be enough.[1] But further, Frederick I desired above all things the recognition of his kingship by the greatest of monarchs. At Ratisbon, where the Diet sat under the involuntary safeguard of Bavarian rebel bayonets, the diplomats whispered that the kingdom of Prussia might one of these mornings be recognized by Louis XIV.

These examples suffice to illustrate the dangerous web of German affairs. Marlborough was aware of these shifting, indeed sinister relations. As James II's confidential agent, as William III's plenipotentiary, he had for a quarter of a century peered intently beneath the surface of the European scene. His information about the various states and princes of Germany was as carefully collected and sifted as his military intelligence, of which, indeed, it was an integral part. He had to measure the potential movements of his allies with as much care as those of the enemy, or his own marches and the supply of his own troops. Whether these evil tendencies would become dominant in 1704 turned upon belief or disbelief in the victory of France. Fear and hatred of French ascendancy would not hold the Alliance together beyond the hour when hope of beating France departed. Then Germany and Europe must accommodate themselves to the new dispensation, and prudent princes must not be unprepared for that. The Grand Alliance quivered at this moment in every part of its vast fragile organization. Marlborough saw that without some enormous new upholding force it must come clattering down. Could he impart that force, or would he, if he tried, only be buried in the ruins? No wonder as he listened to Wratislaw's advocacy he weighed all things carefully in his massive scales.

When, on March 21/April 1, the news arrived of General Goor's definite order of withdrawal, Wratislaw protested violently. "The carrying out of this order," he said, "would set Marshal Tallard absolutely free to throw a new and large reinforcement into Bavaria. I beg you to protest, so that the States-General do not heedlessly gamble with the very existence of the Empire."[2]

At this point Marlborough revealed a different attitude. He promised to use all his influence with the States-General to cancel their order. "But," he said to Wratislaw, "I cannot accomplish anything except by word of mouth. I beg you to go over with me." Wratislaw declared he would never leave his side.

Thus when Marlborough returned to The Hague in the third

[1] Lamberty, iii, 460.

[2] Wratislaw's dispatch, April 1, 1704; Klopp, xi, 98.

week of April two most important points were established. The leading personages in Holland had made up their minds that some kind of campaign on the Moselle was inevitable, and that they would have to play their part. The second was that, unknown to the Dutch, Marlborough had procured from the Imperial Court satisfactory conditions for a campaign on the Danube. The Dutch authorities had taken a big step forward without suspecting any ultimate desire, and the Empire spread a carpet of welcome at his feet. We cannot pronounce how far these advantages were the result of the designs of Marlborough or of the course of events. He must by now have studied in hard detail the elaborate mechanism of a march to the Danube and also of the campaign in Bavaria if he got there. This comprised, first, the military disengagement from the Dutch of whatever army he could gather; secondly, the safety of the Netherlands in his absence; thirdly, the movement of his army up the Rhine and through the German states; fourthly, the movements which the French would make when they saw what he was doing; fifthly, the supply and financing of his army and its re-equipment through Germany as might be necessary at every stage; sixthly, the opening of a new and natural line of communications into Germany once he had entered the Danube basin; and, seventhly, how to coerce or crush the Elector of Bavaria. None of these matters could be left vaguely to chance, and, as we shall see from the marvellous smoothness with which everything was executed, all must have been foreseen and prepared. He had, we know, only a very small group to explore and implement his plans, and all manner of arrangements that would now be made automatically by a general staff had to be devised and settled by him and his personal military secretariat. Even now he could come to no decision till he saw how he stood with the States-General. But there is little doubt that from now onward he meant to march to the Danube unless prevented by the enemy.

It was, of course, indispensable to have some authority from the Queen and the Cabinet before entering upon the discussion with the States-General upon which action would follow. Wratislaw therefore prepared a memorandum for presentation to Queen Anne on behalf of the Emperor, to which a formal and constitutional answer would be given by the Secretary of State in Queen Anne's name as partial protection from impeachment should the fortune of war go ill. Marlborough, Godolphin, and Wratislaw sat together upon this document while it was still in draft. This shows that it was brought

forward by Wratislaw at their instigation, or at least with their collusion, and not, as Klopp supposes, to put pressure upon them. Wratislaw's dispatches give the gist of their discussion. All saw that the separation of the Queen's forces from the Dutch would gravely perturb the leaders of the Republic. They canvassed the timidity and despondency which might result. It was a question how far this might go—possibly even to the breaking up of the alliance and a separate peace. Wratislaw argued that Holland in its political confusion and deadlock would not be capable of deciding to quit the Alliance before the end of the summer at the worst: whereas the Empire, if not delivered, would fall to pieces long before. If the advance of the English army into the midst of Germany were successful, all would be well; if not, "there would not be much more to lose." This dour logic was accepted. Marlborough and Godolphin approved the memorandum, invited the Ambassador to present it to the Queen, and promised to bring it before the Cabinet.

It is impossible that such a tense conversation could have taken place between three men whose lives and fortunes were all involved and whose hearts beat as one in the general cause without all the cards being thrown on the table. Godolphin certainly knew henceforward what Marlborough meant to do. No one can ever know what Marlborough, or Sarah—so far as she was instructed—said to the Queen, and Anne certainly would not have greatly concerned herself with the strategic significance of the various theatres mentioned. But it may be taken as certain that she knew that her army was to be sent very far into Europe to save the Empire, and that she meant that it should go, and desired to bear the consequences, whatever they might be.

We have thus examined the genesis of the Blenheim campaign. It will be seen that Wratislaw, going beyond his instructions, pleaded for it; that Marlborough, at a moment which cannot be fixed, undertook it; that Godolphin shared the responsibility; and that the Queen, trusting in her devoted servants, issued the commands they desired of her. Archdeacon Coxe states that this decision was taken "through the agency of Prince Eugene, with whom he [Marlborough] had secretly arranged the whole plan of the campaign."[1] And in a footnote he refers to "letters from Eugene to Marlborough, in the Blenheim papers." We have found no such letters in the Blenheim Papers. There is, on the contrary, a lengthy message from Eugene to Marlborough of the middle of February, sent through

[1] Coxe, i, 316.

Whitworth, the English envoy at Vienna, in which there is not a hint of Marlborough's coming to Germany.[1] It seems certain from the account we have given that until at least the middle of April neither Eugene nor anyone in Vienna had dared to hope for the good tidings which Wratislaw was able to convey. Although the Ambassador was the author of no discovery or invention, although he ran no risk and incurred no major responsibility, his clear view and earnest assiduity in these memorable events entitle him to long renown.

While all these public troubles and stresses fell upon Marlborough, there was suddenly thrust upon him the torment of a personal trial. We have not hesitated about publishing the poignant letters which follow, and from which we can to some extent reconstruct the story. The complaint is always made that Marlborough has never been made known in his soul and human nature to history. We have his youthful escapades; we have his chequered middle life; but thereafter he appears only as a commander, as a functionary, or as the builder of a private fortune. The exposure of every detail of Napoleon's life, the searchlights which are cast upon the character of Frederick the Great, have not dimmed their grandeur to modern eyes. And after more than two hundred years have passed there is no reason to conceal intimate facts about a great man's life from public knowledge. Moreover, in our human state there is no separation between public deeds and personal psychology, and the story of the one would be incomplete without the other.

Sarah had been smitten to the core by the death of her son. It affected, said one observer, "not only her heart, but her brain." It had "near touched" her head, wrote another.[2] The hope to which she had clung of bearing another son had failed in the summer, and she underwent not only grief, but those profound changes which mark the sad climacteric in a woman's life. Some time at the end of the year she persuaded herself that John had been unfaithful to her, and was obsessed with the idea that he was intriguing with, or "sending to," some lady upon whose identity Time has cast a decorous veil. It would seem from the letters that Lord Sunderland had made mischief in family, as well as in political affairs. He had said something to his mother-in-law which had thrown her into paroxysms of rage and distress. Husband and wife had been happy

[1] Whitworth to Marlborough, February 13, 1704 (Blenheim MSS.).
[2] Lady Pye to Abigail Harley, April 14; Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 59.

in a brief spell together at Holywell, and this trouble fell upon them when they came back to London to meet the insistent demands of public affairs.

John to Sarah

LONDON
[*April* 1704]

*When I do swear to you as I do that I love you, it is not dissembling. As I know your temper, I am very sensible that what I say signifies nothing. However, I can't forbear repeating what I said yesterday, which is that I never sent to her in my life, and may my happiness in the other world as well as in this depend upon the truth of this. If there be aught that I could do to let you know my innocency I should be glad to do it, tho I am sensible you can never esteem me: so that long life is not what I wish for, but after my death you may have juster and kinder thoughts of me than is possible for you to have of me whilst I am living. You say that every hour since I came from St Albans has given you fresh assurances of my hating you, and that you know I have sent to this woman; these two things are barbarous, for I have not for these many years thought myself so happy by your kindness as for these last five or six days, and if you could at that same time think I hated you I am most miserable. And for the last which you say you are sure of, may I and all that is dear to me be curs'd if ever I sent to her, or had anything to do with her, or ever endeavoured to have.

Marlborough to Godolphin

Friday morning

*You know the tender concern I have for Lady Marl.; so that I need not tell you how unhappy her unkindness makes me. I would have seen you this morning, but that I am not fit for any company. But if I can I will wait upon you on Sunday.

John to Sarah

Saturday

*After your kind way of living with me since we came last from St Albans, which made me think I should always be happy, I did little expect to have had anybody put you in so ill humour as to make me so miserable as I am at this time. [As] for your suspicion of me as to this woman, that will vanish, but it can never go out of my mind the opinion you must have of me, after my solemn protesting and swearing that it did not gain any belief with you. This thought has made me take no rest this night, and will for ever make me unhappy. I know not what to say more but do assure you in the presence of God this is the truth of my soul.

John to Sarah

*I do call God to witness, and as he may be merciful to me the last day, that when I came home this last time I loved you so tenderly that I proposed all the happiness imaginable in living quietly with you the remaining part of my life. I do to my great grief see that you have fixed in you so very ill an opinion of me that I must never more think of being happy.

If the thought of the children that we have had, or aught else that has ever been dear between us, can oblige you to be so good natur'd as not to leave my bed for the remaining time, I shall take it kindly to my dying day, and do most faithfully promise you that I will take the first occasion of leaving England, and assure you, that you may rest quiet that from that time you shall never more be troubled with my hated sight.

My heart is so full that if I do not vent this truth it will break, which is that I do from my soul curse that hour in which I gave my poor dear child to a man that has made me of all mankind the most unhappiest.[1]

We can add nothing to these letters except to set them in their frame.

To complete the picture of Marlborough at this moment we must remind the reader of two papers. The first is the report of the Jacobite agent Hooke to the "pretended Prince of Wales" of April 22.

Some days before leaving for Holland Lord Churchill had me sought out, and made me so many promises, and gave me such proof of the rightness of his intention to wish to pay the debt which he had recognized so long was due to your family, that I could have no doubt of his sincerity.

He seemed astonished that the Duke of Berwick had been sent to Spain and engaged so far afield, and he asked me how you could have consented to such a thing. I told him that you had already written to me on the subject, and that the Duke's employment in so considerable a post would be certainly highly advantageous for our common interests. I perceived, however, that he thought that the Duke would have been more useful in the theatre where he was last year.

He directed me besides in his absence to go and see Lord Godolphin and let him know anything which I should receive of importance to you and to your family.[2]

[1] This cannot refer to anyone but Sunderland.
[2] Carte MSS., 209, f. 430. See also Vol. I, p. 329.

The foolish Jacobite scribes and many English historians might seek in this document an additional proof of Marlborough's treachery to the Protestant Succession. Here he was, intriguing again with the Court of Saint-Germains and professing allegiance to the Royal Exile. Anyone of average intelligence who reads Hooke's report in its context of events will realize that Marlborough saw the Jacobite agent only in order to deceive him and to pump him. He was making a supreme exertion and staking life, fortune, and honour in an attempt which was hostile in the last degree to the Pretender's interests; and as a part of the mystery and darkness with which he enveloped his military designs, as a piece of information that could hardly be fitted into any scheme, he sent these agreeable, soothing messages through Hooke to Saint-Germains, and through Saint-Germains to Louis XIV. At the French headquarters the obvious effect of Hooke's report would be to reduce their anxiety about Marlborough's possible activities.[1] He took so much trouble about so many small stratagems that we cannot tell whether this particular manœuvre was actually important or not. But its purpose needs no further pointing. Even the dullest of the Jacobites or the most prejudiced of our historians can see that it was not against England or Queen Anne that Marlborough was using his arts. Incidentally he seems to have gained the valuable certainty that Berwick, whose qualities he admired and respected, would be safely out of the way in Spain. There is another aspect of Marlborough's communications with the Jacobites when he was at the head of anti-Jacobite armies—namely, espionage in the highest circles, to which we shall recur later in the story.

The second document is a letter from Marlborough which finally decided the new combination upon which Queen Anne's Government must be based pending the result of the campaign about to open. Marlborough's political information was as good as his military intelligence. It is the General who reveals to the Treasurer the intrigue which threatens the Government with mortal danger. On April 8 Marlborough sent the following letter to Godolphin as he was about to embark from the Harwich quay.

> I could not leave this place without acquainting you with what has been told me respecting lord Nottingham. The Speaker will be able to let you know how much of it may be true. I am assured that he tells his party that the queen is desirous to do everything that would give them satisfaction, but that she is hindered by you and me;

[1] The document is in the French archives.

> that he is so convinced we shall in a very short time put all the business into the hands of the Whigs, that if he cannot get such alterations made in the cabinet council as he thinks absolutely necessary for the safety of the church, he would then quit; that he would speak very plainly to you and myself before I left England, and that his opinion was that in the next session, *they should tack to the land tax the bill of occasional conformity*, and that of accounts, which was the only way of making them pass the house of lords; for then you and I would be zealous for it, notwithstanding our inclinations. If all this should be true, as I really believe it is, he is in my opinion doing Her Majesty all the hurt that he is capable of.[1]

He sailed again for the wars on this same day. With him were Wratislaw, his brother General Churchill, Cadogan, Orkney, and many other officers, and, of course, Cardonnel. A fleet of transports carrying four infantry regiments and several thousand drafts convoyed by battleships and frigates accompanied him. He must have bade a grim farewell to England. Sarah was at the waterside. The breach between them was not closed. She had repulsed his passionate appeals. She handed to him as they parted a paper setting forth her position and containing several painful things. She knew that he was going upon a high and dangerous enterprise, that there was desperation in his mood, that he would be in the forefront of great battles, that she might never see him again. Yet he was her whole life.

His feelings about his own affairs and his country's fortune were sombre. The national and political situation was dangerous and hateful. On every side were jealousy and baseness. The Tory Party was still harrying the Dissenters. The Whigs and Tories hated each other worse than the foreign enemy. The Lords and Commons were at bitter variance. Scotland seemed to be moving, not to union with England, but to a separate peace with France and a neutrality which could only mean civil war. The Cabinet struggles were burning swiftly into crisis. The old arrangement had broken in pieces, the new had not yet been established. Even the throne of the Queen seemed to quiver. Beyond the cold, rough sea bristled all the obstinate, intricate confusions of Dutch politics, and the cracking structure of the Grand Alliance; and beyond them all—if only he could reach them—stood the foe.

[1] Coxe, i, 310.

Chapter Fourteen

TREPANNING AN ARMY

1704—APRIL

THE strategic results of Bavaria's joining France and Spain in 1702 resemble curiously in many points those that followed the accession of Turkey to Germany and Austria in 1914. The enemy in his central position had gained a state which lay across the circuitous communications of the allies. The defection of Bavaria separated the large, loosely knit, ill-equipped, but none the less indispensable mass of the Empire from the rest of the confederacy, in the same way as the hostility of Turkey cut Russia off from the allies in the Great War. The isolation and forcing of the Empire into a separate peace in 1704 seemed as certainly fatal to the allied cause as the same events in Russia would have been in 1915. Exactly the same issues arose on both occasions among those responsible for the safety of Britain and her friends. Should relief be given to the cut-off member of the alliance by striving to pierce the fortified lines in Flanders or by swiftly striking down the new opponent locally, and restoring the exterior communications of all the states leagued against the Central Powers? On both occasions grave differences of opinion prevailed which aggravated the difficulties of decisive action. But there was also a great contrast. The allies of 1914 could, if they so resolved, strike down Turkey with ease and swiftness by a naval or amphibious operation. Their forebears in 1704 could only reach Bavaria by a long and hazardous march across Europe and amid its moving armies.

Marlborough and Wratislaw arrived in Holland on April 21. "With Marlborough's journey," wrote Hoffmann to the Emperor, "the conduct of foreign affairs will be transferred from London to The Hague."[1] Unfortunately at this juncture Heinsius was ailing. His burdens bowed him down. Already in the winter he had seemed to an English observer "not just the same Pensioner we had here six years ago."[2] Now he showed plain signs of mental and physical

[1] Hoffmann's dispatch of April 16.

[2] Hill to Nottingham, November 3, 1703; Blackley, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard Hill*, i, 277.

exhaustion. He shrank from decision. It is impossible to say whether he knew what Marlborough really purposed. Certainly he did what he could to help him as far as he could see. But a new chapter had opened in the affairs of the Alliance. The war-policy had been settled between England and the Empire. Only at the final stage were the wavering yet obstinate States-General to be consulted.

Marlborough in fact was now acting in sole responsibility. He found the Dutch in the worst of moods, resolved to keep all their forces in Flanders, except, as a great concession and for the sake of agreement, to allow fifteen thousand men to go to the Moselle. He warned the Deputies for Secret Affairs at the outset that Louis XIV would open the campaign by sending another French corps to reinforce the Elector in Bavaria. It would therefore be wrong to recall the troops paid by the Maritime Powers which were already on the spot. His first trial of strength was taken upon this, the easiest issue. The four provinces of Guelders, Groningen, Zeeland, and Utrecht argued none the less for the recall of the troops; but Marlborough, aided by the Pensionary, gained the support of the Deputies of Friesland and Overyssel, and, above all, of the Deputy for the predominant province of Holland. After many hours the decision was reached not to withdraw the troops from Germany for the present. This marked a first and definite success.[1]

The Duke then proceeded to argue for a strong campaign upon the Moselle. The fifteen thousand troops suggested were useless; they bore no proportion to any plan. A good army must be formed there which he would command. As the anxious debate rambled on Marlborough disclosed day by day a little more of his intentions. It became clearer to his audience that he had made up his mind. Presently he mentioned that, if opportunity offered, he would join battle with the enemy without consulting the States-General or the Field-Deputies. A hum of disapproval swept the crowded council chamber. Not even the late Stadtholder-King, declared the Zeelanders, had possessed such plenary powers.[2] Zeeland even spoke of "secession."

There must be an end to all this. The hostile armies were now coming into action in every theatre. On May 2 he struck his decisive blow. Having put his views to the three Dutch Generals with whom he could work best, Overkirk, Dopff, and Goor,[3] he requested a

[1] Goes's dispatch of April 29.

[2] Goes's dispatch of May 2.

[3] This officer had not been recalled from his command. He was merely summoned to the conference.

meeting with the heads of the Government in the house of the Grand Pensionary. Here the Dutchman saw a different Marlborough. Hitherto their valued Deputy Captain-General had always submitted to their final judgment. He had pleaded with them often, long, and persistently in 1702 and 1703; but they had always found that the final word rested with them. This day it was otherwise. Marlborough declared that he meant to march with the whole of the English and English-paid troops to Coblenz. He displayed upon the table the Order in Council he had obtained, in circumstances already described, from the Queen. When the Ministers sought to continue the argument he silenced them with hauteur, the more impressive because unwonted. He observed that, this being the definite order of the Queen, he could not permit himself to criticize or discuss it. He charged them so to inform the States-General.

That night he wrote to Godolphin:

THE HAGUE
May 1

By the advice of my friends that I advise with here, I have this afternoon declared to the deputies of the States my resolution of going to the Moselle, and that I would leave this place on Monday. There having been some speeches in the States-General, particularly by some of the Zeelanders, that it was not safe to let their troops go so far from their frontier, my friends were of opinion that I ought not to consult the States any farther, than to declare my resolution of serving there. I shall not know till to-morrow how far they will be satisfied with this. . . . Since I have no thought in this matter but what is for the queen's service and the public good, I do noways doubt but her Majesty will approve it; *for I am very sensible that I take a great deal upon me. But should I act otherwise, the empire would be undone, and consequently the confederacy.*

When I come to Philippsburg, if the French shall have joined any more troops to the elector of Bavaria, *I shall make no difficulty of marching to the Danube.* . . . I shall be, as in all things else, extremely glad to receive your thoughts on all this matter.[1]

This is the first time the word 'Danube' is mentioned in Marlborough's secret correspondence; but it was no surprise to Godolphin.

The full conference the next day met in a tense atmosphere. The Deputies besought the Duke to explain his plan more precisely. On this he took up a position difficult to assail; the plan must be

[1] Coxe, i, 320.

reserved for settlement with the Margrave of Baden. It was not for him alone to prescribe its tactical features before he had even met the eminent soldier at whose side he was to serve. And then in the pause which followed he added with alarming irrelevance, "Care must be taken about the necessary supplies of powder." At this the resistance of the assembly gave way. What else could they do? The only choice open was a campaign on the Moselle in which they would be consulted, or one in which they would be left to themselves. It was the shock they needed. The Captain-General's firm decision "deprived the governing classes of the Netherlands of the will to resist."[1] Having yielded, they gave, like the robust folk they were, the Duke their heartfelt blessing, and promised whatever aid was in their power. They resolved to approve whatever he might decide to be serviceable to the common cause, and ordered instructions to be sent to their envoy in Frankfort, d'Almelo, to help him in every way.

Nothing, of course, had been proposed to the States-General but the Moselle. The arguments about the impending fall of the Empire and ruin of the confederacy were addressed solely to the proposition that Marlborough should transport an army to Coblenz. If anyone had blurted out the Danube or even the Upper Rhine, the course of history might have been deflected. Marlborough had already set on foot many preparations for supplies, and the necessary agencies of finance centring upon Coblenz and Frankfort, all of which would be necessary to carry a main thrust of the allies up the Moselle. Much of this was bound to leak out. In fact, Marlborough did not seem to care very much if it did. His customary secrecy and reserve seemed to break down upon this aspect. He had already written a letter to the King of Prussia imparting to him the outline of the Moselle operation, going so far as to name dates and places where collisions might occur, and inviting his royal and military opinion thereupon.[2]

While this decision was being extorted from the Dutch, Marlborough had required Wratislaw to secure most explicit pledges from the Emperor that he would proceed against his rebellious vassal with the utmost rigour. He required an Imperial order to the Margrave, "in his own hand or that of the King of the Romans; to put all other schemes aside and to operate with Marlborough against the Elector." He asked also for the presence of Prince Eugene. Wratislaw took this upon his own shoulders. "It is

[1] Von Noorden, i, 533. [2] The Hague, May 5; *Dispatches*, i, 253.

absolutely necessary," he wrote to the Emperor, "that I should have a supporter of his zeal and experience." Moreover, Eugene must be furnished with powers sufficient, in conjunction with Wratislaw, to remove, or even, though this was only implied, to arrest the Margrave, should he falter or abuse his trust. "I once again beg Your Majesty for God's sake not to waste a minute," wrote the faithful and busy Envoy,

> for on time depends the carrying out of this plan, and on its carrying out depend the greatness and permanence of your princely house.
>
> Marlborough, who has come to me as I write these lines, requests me to lay his personal homage at Your Majesty's feet, and assure you that he and his whole army will advance into the Empire with the determination to sacrifice the lives of all or to conquer the Elector. For if that last should not happen, then in England and in Holland he would be lost for ever. But nevertheless he declares that should he see on the part of your Majesty no sincere resolve to suppress the Elector, he would be compelled to withdraw himself and his troops immediately.[1]

And the next day, May 6, Wratislaw wrote to the Margrave in a similar strain to inform him that Marlborough would advance by way of Coblenz and the south. "I assure your Highness," he added, "that Marlborough sets out with the fixed intention of taking a hand in that great enterprise. His own words are: *The issue in this matter is victory or death.*" These were very unusual expressions for the sober-spoken and matter-of-fact Marlborough. Assuredly they did not go beyond the naked truth. While Marlborough was wrestling with the Dutch Deputies the Margrave had already formed independently very similar views. He had in fact written to Wratislaw:

> In the position in which we now find ourselves we can in my judgment do nothing better or more useful than the overthrow of the Elector of Bavaria. So soon as the decision is taken, to unite the armies and crush him by superior force is a matter of two months.[2]

Wratislaw, surprised and overjoyed by this letter, set out post-haste to the Margrave's headquarters at Oettlingen. On May 17 he was closeted for five hours with the Margrave. There was evidently a sting in the Margrave's agreement. He faced the facts; but he placed an uncomplimentary construction on the conditions prescribed. Wratislaw reported to the Emperor:

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch, The Hague, May 5, 1704; *Feldzüge des Prinzen Eugen*, vi, 735–737.

[2] Röder, ii, 23.

In accordance with his obligations to Your Majesty in this grave matter, the Margrave has offered to do everything that can be serviceable to this great undertaking, as he then with the greatest abnegation seeks nothing for himself, but will leave all the honour and gain to Marlborough, if only Your Majesty's service be promoted thereby.[1]

The Emperor for his part had already written on May 15, after praising the zeal and address of his Envoy:

Especially have you done well in giving Lord Marlborough every possible assurance that I cannot now do anything else but seek, in every way and earnestly, to secure that the Elector of Bavaria is brought to recognize his shame and his blunders. Up to now I have not failed to exercise the utmost clemency towards him, only in order that thereby he might amend the presumptuousness and injustice with which he pursues me. But not only has there been no change in his course, but he has indeed abused my clemency. Consequently the time has at last come for him to suffer the operations of justice.

He agreed to the sending of Prince Eugene:

From this decision on my part there should readily be deduced the eagerness with which I take part in this matter, and how greatly I hope for a happy issue, inasmuch as in the present state of affairs I am sending away from myself and my supreme war council a person that I value so highly.[2]

Further, he wrote to the Margrave on May 14:

On the fortunate result of this stroke depends the salvation of us all and the desired object of this war. Because of our paternal anxiety for the Empire, and in accordance with the obligation of the Alliance, *I will not consent to any other operation at the opening of this campaign.*[3]

Marlborough did not belong to the stern and silent type of men of action. On the contrary, he was affable and talkative. People learned from his easy and genial flow of conversation what he wanted them to know. All about him in Holland were spies and go-betweens. Permits to pass the lines of the armies were easily obtained on both sides. Many men must often have been misled by his graceful confidences. Ailesbury is an unconscious witness of his methods at this time. He describes how he visited the Duke at Maestricht and was welcomed in his own apartment, and how later all the generals came in. "There in my presence they were regulating the marches, and my lord asking what general officer would be,

[1] Wratislaw's dispatch from Frankfurt, May 22; Klopp, xi, 114.
[2] *Feldzüge*, vi, 824. [3] Röder, ii, 27.

of the day, as they term. And then asked if such and such had a good cook, as that they should treat him at supper after marches, whereas a general in chief like him ought to have kept a great table. It was given out for a blind," says Ailesbury (writing long afterwards), "that they were going towards the Moselle to attack France towards the four bishoprics, when indeed they were marching for the Danube."[1] No doubt this incident was 'part of the blind.' Ailesbury was a well-known gossip and had a wide connexion. He was therefore a handy instrument of indiscretion.

The series of unpublished letters which follows describes Marlborough's movements in his own words. They show his feeling that he was going upon a grave and almost desperate adventure; and they breathe a spirit of tranquil and lofty resignation to whatever Fate might impose. We can also see that hitherto Sarah had not been told his real intentions, and how bit by bit the curtain was lifted on the wider scene.

Marlborough to Godolphin[2]

HAGUE
April 25, 1704

*I expect about the middle of the next week an express from Prince Louis. Till that comes I can't leave this place. Everybody here is very backward in sending what I think absolutely [necessary] for the saving of the Empire, so that hitherto I have only been able to hinder them, from recalling the troops that are already there. You will see by the German letters that the Elector of Bavaria began to encamp at Ulm the 15th of this month and that the Marshal de Tallard was to begin the same day, so that now every post will bring us news. I pray God it be not very bad. I shall use my utmost endeavours to get them all the help I can from hence, being fully persuaded that we shall be undone, *if we can't get the better of them in that country*. I am afraid I shall want the Queen's help in the matter. I have not been free from the headache since I came to this place, and I am afraid I shall not till I get to the army. The English will begin their march next Thursday.[3]

John to Sarah

HAGUE
April 25, 1704

*The wind is so contrary that I must not expect any letters. I shall stay here till about this day senight. I can't yet tell you whether I shall serve in this country or Germany, but if we do not send troops from hence, that country will be undone. However I find great unwilling-

[1] Ailesbury, ii, 570.
[2] Extract.
[3] On May 1, from their winter quarters at Breda.

ness here to part with any troops, which gives me a good deal of trouble; for I wish this country so well that I should take pleasure in seeing them do everything that is for their good; but they are, as well as we, so eaten up by faction that I am afraid they will run great risk of being undone.

Whatever becomes of me, I wish you with all my heart, all happiness.

Sarah's conscience had evidently been pricking her about the "paper" she handed her husband on his departure. Her pride still resisted her heart; but less confidently than before.

John to Sarah

HAGUE
April 29, 1704

*I have this afternoon received two of yours from St Albans, where with all my heart I wish myself. You are so good in one of yours to take notice that I might not like something you had written in the paper you gave me at Harwich. I do own to you that I have had more melancholy thoughts and spleen at what you said in that paper than I am able to express, but was resolved never to have mentioned it more to you after the answer I gave to it, which I hope is come to your hands, for I am impatient of having the copy of my Will. . . .

The people here continue their desires of having me serve this campaign in Flanders, but my own resolution is to go to the Moselle, and if the Service requires, from thence into Germany. The English troops begin to march next Saturday [May 3],[1] and I shall leave this place on Monday. My next will let you know for certain where I shall serve this summer. Where ere it is you have a faithful Servant, *tho' loaded with many faults.*

I desire Ld. Cutts may bring me two Stars, I having none to put upon any clothes I shall make, and if it is not too much trouble to him, a little lickerish, and Rubarb.

John to Sarah

HAGUE
May 2, 1704

. . . I reckon to leave this place upon Monday [May 5], and in my way I intend to lie one night at my Lord Albemarle's, so that a-Saturday [May 10] I shall dine in the Army on the Meuse and continue there 2 or 3 days, and afterwards join those troops that are designed for the Moselle. But I shall not continue in this country long, *for I intend to go higher up into Germany,* which I am forced as yet to keep here a secret, for fear these people would be apprehensive of letting their troops go so far.

[1] From their winter quarters. The actual march to the Moselle began on Monday May 5.

Nothing could have made me *take so much upon myself in this matter*, but that I see the French must overrun the Empire if we do not help them at this time. I am very sensible that if we have not success, I shall be found fault with, by those in this country that will think themselves exposed for want of the troops I shall have in Germany; but I shall have the quiet of mind to know that I have done what I think is the best; and if we have good success, the Empire must own that they are saved by these troops. I have another consideration that gives me uneasiness which is that I shall not be able to hear so regularly from you, and my friends, as when I am in this country; but I am not to be happy in this world. *What ever happens to me* I beg you will believe that my heart is entirely yours, and that I have no thoughts, but what is for the good of my country.

Remember me kindly to my dear Children.

On the eve of his departure from The Hague he received a letter which filled him with joy. Sarah's heart had conquered. She wrote to her husband in love and reconciliation. The Harwich paper was for ever to be blotted out. All her reproaches and suspicions were abandoned. Her one wish was now to join him at the wars.

John to Sarah

HAGUE
May 5

Your dear letter of the 15th came to me but this minute. My lord treasurer's letter in which it was inclosed, by some mistake was sent to Amsterdam. I would not for anything in my power it had been lost; for it is so very kind that I would in return lose a thousand lives if I had them to make you happy. Before I sat down to write this letter, I took yours that you wrote at Harwich out of my strong box and have burnt it; and if you will give me leave, it will be a great pleasure to me to have it in my power to read this dear letter often, and that it may be found in my strong box when I am dead. I do this minute love you better than ever I did before. This letter of yours has made me so happy that I do from my soul wish we could retire and not be blamed. What you propose as to coming over I should be extremely pleased with; for your letter has so transported me that I think you would be happier in being here than where you are, although I should not be able to see you often. But you will see by my last letter, as well as this, that what you desire is impossible; for I am going up into Germany, where it would be impossible for you to follow me; but love me as you now do, and no hurt can come to me. You have by this kindness preserved my quiet, and I believe my life; for till I had this letter I have been very indifferent of what should become of myself. I have pressed this business of carrying an army

into Germany in order to leave a good name behind me, wishing for nothing else but good success. I shall now add, that of having a long life, that I may be happy with you.[1]

Before we set forth on the famous adventure it will be convenient to take leave of English politics for a time. The resolve which Marlborough had taken before leaving England to have done with Nottingham and the letter he had written to Godolphin to that end had now borne fruit. Nottingham did not underrate the quality of his opponents, nor the probable accuracy of Marlborough's information of his designs. He doubtless knew that Marlborough and Godolphin were preparing to drive him from power, and he now resolved to forestall them. Shortly after Marlborough sailed for the Continent Nottingham presented to Godolphin, and afterwards, to the Queen, a very direct ultimatum. It was impossible, he intimated, to continue with a hybrid Ministry. Either it must be Tory or it must be Whig. If it were Tory he and his friends would form a united Administration to serve the Queen and carry on the war as they thought fit. If it were Whig they would oppose the Government by every means in their power. The Queen must choose, and to prove her choice he demanded the immediate dismissal of the Whig Dukes of Somerset and Devonshire from their offices and from the Privy Council. Unless these requests were complied with, he would tender his resignation.

Such language coming from a Minister who commanded a majority in the House of Commons necessarily brought all political affairs to a crisis. But Nottingham did not rightly measure Queen Anne. He counted too much upon the respect and liking which the Queen had for him and, like Rochester the year before, on her personal sympathy with his principles in Church and State. He did not understand that Anne more than anything else wanted her England to win the war, and was prepared to suppress her dearest convictions for that purpose. He did not even now realize that, compared with Mr Freeman and Mr Montgomery, he was only a great noble and a high functionary. Moreover, his challenging procedure and the criticism which his party had permitted themselves to direct against the Queen were bound to rouse her slow but massive combativeness and engage her royal pride, her sense of duty to the nation and of loyalty to her general and the army he was leading so far. We may also suppose that Marlborough, Godolphin, and Mr Speaker

[1] Coxe, i, 322.

Harley had a well-concerted plan of action, and knew where they stood with the Sovereign.

When Nottingham tendered his resignation the Queen desired him to reconsider the matter. But a few days later, instead of parting with the Whig Dukes of Somerset and Devonshire, two Tory Ministers, Sir Edward Seymour and the Earl of Jersey, Nottingham's immediate adherents, were summarily dismissed from their offices. They hastened indignant to vaunt their wounds to their startled party. There is a curious letter from the Queen to Sarah acquainting her with the royal decision. The grammar is mixed, the style is impersonal, there is a guise of anonymity; but the force and meaning are as lively to-day as when these lines were penned.

> KENSINGTON
> *Thursday morning*
>
> I am just come to this place to get a little air and quiet. I am told by a very good hand that the queen has sent a message to lord Jersey and Sir Edward Seymour which they will not like. Sure this will convince Mrs Freeman that I never had any partiality to any of these persons; for if that had been so, this would certainly never have been done. *Something more of this nature it is believed will soon happen, that will not be disagreeable to Mrs Freeman.*[1]

Something more of this nature that was not disagreeable to Mrs Freeman, in fact, happened immediately. Nottingham was so staggered by the rough dismissal of his friends that he seemed inclined to leave his own resignation in abeyance. The mood of the Tory Party left him no choice. He renewed his request to retire, and was at once shown the door. Officially the Tory Party now went into opposition. But it was soon apparent that there was a considerable body of Tory Members who were indisposed to violent faction in the midst of an adverse war. These Members clustered around the Speaker, and a rift soon opened between them and the main body of their party. It was evident that the immediate sequel to the dismissal of Nottingham must be a system based upon Harley and the moderate Tories, or 'Sneakers,' as they were unkindly called by all true 'gentlemen of England.'

Marlborough must have had a good understanding with Harley before he left England, and he pressed upon Godolphin his prompt appointment to the vacant Secretaryship of State. The new system for the House of Commons pivoted on Harley. The replacement of Nottingham must be made without delay. Any interlude would be

[1] Coxe, i, 312.

not only detrimental, but dangerous. The political foundation must be made as solid as possible in view of the stresses to which it would soon be exposed. "By what you say to me," Marlborough wrote to Godolphin from Vorst on May 7, "I take it for granted by the next post to hear Lord Nottingham has given up the Seal, which makes me beg you will take no excuse from 46 [Harley] but that he must immediately come in."

Harley had not gone so far in these serious affairs without facing their logical conclusion. Nevertheless he showed a becoming diffidence, and even affected repugnance to accepting the seals. His scruples were overcome, and on May 18 he added the principal Secretaryship of State to his far-reaching duties as Speaker of the House of Commons. Various minor 'Sneakers' and several Whigs reconstituted the Ministry. Among the former none was more remarkable than Henry St John. His first leap into prominence had been made by his ruthless espousal of the Occasional Conformity Bill. It was he who, with eloquence unmatched then and perhaps thereafter, had expressed the deepest convictions and sharpest appetites of the Tory Highflyers. His second stage had been to ingratiate himself with Harley. His third was to win the regard, almost the affection, of Marlborough. This brilliant being was now flying speedfully upward. He did not worry much more about the Occasional Conformity Bill. On the contrary, he succeeded with alacrity the veteran official Blathwayt—whom we last heard of in the same office in 1688—as Secretary at War. The orthodox Tories were disrespectful about these performances, and found even the term 'Sneaker' unsatisfying; but the youthful St John was dazzled by the glamour of public office, thrilled at being able to lay his hands upon the machinery of war, and fascinated by contact with the great commander whom he set himself to court with all his adulatory magic of pen and tongue.

Thus there was constructed another 'National' Ministry in which Whigs and Tories found their places. But the real Tory Party, dominated by the country clergy, was embattled against the Government, and in direct pursuit of Marlborough and Godolphin; while the Whigs were not sufficiently represented to bind them as a party. The new Ministry had no majority in the House of Commons. But the supply for the year had already been voted, Parliament was about to be prorogued, and before it met again the war would be lost or won.

Sarah's reaction to these changes must be marked. Her view was

certainly logical, and perhaps it was true. She believed that the times were too serious for any compromise coalition called 'National.' A rigorous Government on a strict party basis could alone compel discipline and obedience at home and command success abroad. Her outlook agreed with that of Nottingham, except that she thought the Queen should have none but Whigs about her and her two great Ministers. With the profound instinct of a woman where the man she loves is concerned, she warned her lord in repeated letters that Harley and St John were untrustworthy friends who would in the end betray him. For the sake of these 'Sneakers' he was sacrificing the full, powerful, organized support of the great Whig Party, the champions of Protestantism and the inveterate foes of France. Thus she reproached Marlborough for taking half-measures. But Sarah reckoned without the Queen; and perhaps the Queen had already begun to reckon without Sarah.

Chapter Fifteen

THE MARCH TO THE DANUBE

1704—MAY

THE annals of the British Army contain no more heroic episode than this march from the North Sea to the Danube. The strategy which conceived, the secrecy and skill which performed, and the superb victory which crowned the enterprise have always ranked among the finest examples of the art of war. But a brighter and truer glory shines upon the Man than can be won by military genius alone. Never did lifeboat captain launch forth to the rescue of a ship in distress with more selfless devotion to duty. Not Wolfe before Quebec, not Nelson before Trafalgar, nursed a purer love of his country's cause than Marlborough in this supreme passage in his career. The profound calculations which he made, both political and military, could only present a sum of dangers against which forethought could make no provision. All that gallant army that marched with him risked life and honour: but he alone bore the burden. It was for them to obey the lawful authorities. For him the task was to persuade, deceive, and defy them for their own salvation.

Marlborough was the champion of the entire confederacy, accountable for all time for the common cause and the general deliverance. He could not retire. He could not escape. To withdraw to peace and quiet, ease and affluence; to mingle in the vivid politics of the day; to live the interesting and varied life of an English duke, in days when dukes were dukes: nay, to be happy with Sarah, surrounded in the home he had built and was building at Holywell by children and grandchildren—all were temptations to be put aside. But for what? Ambition? Not certainly in any base sense. He had already all its material rewards. He was only a subject and a servant under a monarchy and patriciate and the House of Commons. He might be the greatest of servants. He could never be more. Monarchies and empires were dissolving or being framed upon the Continent. Perhaps they would be made or marred by his sword. But not for him the prizes of Napoleon,

or in later times of cheaper types. His toils could only be for England, for that kind of law the English called freedom, for the Protestant religion, and always in the background for that figure, half mystic symbol and the rest cherished friend, the Queen. But these incentives were respectable. He had to respond to them no matter at what cost in peril or cares. They were also impersonal. A page in history, a niche in Valhalla, and a good conscience to have used well the gifts which God had given: these must be the sole reward of a moral and mental exertion which, for its comprehension and power, has not often been surpassed in history.

But Marlborough felt the greatest compulsion that can come to anyone—the responsibility of proprietorship. It had become his war. He was the hub of the wheel. He was bound to function. He had made the treaties. He had accepted William's bequest. He must discharge it faithfully. He must bring it all to success and safety. The task was his. These foolish-frantic Parliaments, jealous princes, hungry generals, and bitter politicians were all, as he conceived it, in his care. He alone knew the path which would lead them out of their tangles and tribulations, and he was bound to force or trick them to salvation if he could.

Although none of the dangers of his enterprise had been surmounted and its hazards were necessarily imponderable, Marlborough's spirits were high as his coach bore him eastward. He had gathered his army, and wrested it from the Dutch trammels. The British Parliament had been prorogued. With every stage now he would leave England and her jealous politics and Holland with her unreasonable fears farther behind him. The voices of Tory vilipenders and Dutch obstructionists, the endless arguings with councils of war, the wearisome coaxing of the magnates of London and The Hague, the wire-pulling and manipulations of their obstinate, faction-ridden assemblies—all fell away. At last he had an army of his own to command. The Government he left behind in England was no doubt weakened and its foes increased by the purge of the High Tories, but at least it was united and coherent. The Lord Treasurer should be able to hold his own till the autumn, and before then the die would be cast in the open field, and the fate of Europe and the war settled one way or the other. Without a victory of the first order and the signal destruction of one of the main armies of France, all was already lost. But he knew himself and he knew his men, and longed earnestly for the ordeal. Moreover, though the

sword was in his hand and battle was his quest, there was peace in his heart, for Sarah was kind. One crashing blow to restore the allied cause and then home and quiet, leaving "a good name behind." Thus he mused while the coach rumbled on towards the magnificence of Keppel's country seat, where he would "lie one night" on his way to the army on the Meuse.

Marlborough to Godolphin

RUREMOND
May 9, 1704

*The post going this morning for The Hague I would take all occasions of letting you know where I am. I did also write from Nimwegen, but am in much doubt if those letters will ever come to you. Three deserters are just come to this town. They say the French army was to camp this day at Tongres, but I do not believe it. I shall be with our army at 2 o'clock this day, and shall continue there till the middle of the next week for the English will not be here till Monday, and I design to join them in their fourth day's march from hence. . . .

Marlborough to Godolphin

MAESTRICHT
May 11, 1704

*I came to this place yesterday and have this day reviewed the Army [Overkirk's], which as yet are only 44 battalions and 80 squadrons, but in four or five days time they will be 51 battalions and 92 squadrons, which will be stronger than the French, who have already sent a detachment to the Moselle; and when they shall be sure that *the English are marching to Coblenz*, which they will know by Friday, which is the day I intend to leave this Army, they will then most certainly send another detachment, which will give these troops here an opportunity of acting offensively. After the 15th of May the surest way of sending your letters to me, will be to Mr Davenant at Frankfort, who will always know how to send them to me. Not having been on horseback for some time, I am so weary that I can say no more.

John to Sarah

MAESTRICHT
May 14, 1704

*As I let slip no occasion of writing when I have an opportunity of sending to The Hague, you will have two or three letters by some posts, and by others none; but I beg you will be so kind and just to me when that happens to believe it my misfortune and not my fault. But when I come higher into Germany I hope to order it so that my letters, and yours too, may come regularly to us.

We have a great many deserters come in [during] the morning, the French army having yesterday marched out of their lines, and, as

the deserters say, the general discourse in their army is that when the English are gone, they will attack this Army. But I believe their true design is to alarm these people, and at the same time send a great part of their army into Germany; *for if they should let me get ten days before them, they may come too late.*

I have had so little time to myself that I have not been able to write to my dear children, but pray assure them that I am most tenderly theirs. I shall stay here till Friday, and hope to have letters from you to-morrow, having had none from England since the 21st of the last month. I must make an end, being just going on horseback, to learn more news of the enemy. I shall be sure to write again to-morrow night, till when, my dearest soul, farewell.

Marlborough to Godolphin

MAESTRICHT
May 14, 1704

*I should have given you an account of what had passed with the Pensioner concerning the sparing of five or six thousand men towards the end of this summer before now, had I not been sure that you must know that will depend upon the success we shall have; for I shall have too many of their troops in Germany for them to spare any till my return, or that I send them some from thence. The Maréchal de Villeroy began yesterday to encamp his army one league on this side Tirlemont. This [Overkirk's] army intends to continue in this camp as long as they make use of dry forage, which will be about ten days longer, and before that time we believe the French will have detached all the troops they intend for the Moselle. I intend on Friday *to join the English on their march*, having already taken all the measures I can with the Generals of this army, *so that my curiosity makes me stay these two days to see what Mons. de Villeroy will do; and longer I can't well stay.* I have had no letters from England since the 21 of the last month, and I am afraid I must not expect to receive them regularly till I come near Frankfort.

A party is this minute come in, which saw the French marking a camp at Montinac, so that they are marched out of their lines. However, we believe their whole body is not yet joined, for yesterday morning the King of France's household was at Louvain.

John to Sarah

MAESTRICHT
May 15, 1704

*I was in hopes to have had letters from you this day, but the Dutch post is come and there are no English letters. I go from hence to-morrow, and hope in ten days to be at Coblenz,[1] where I propose to myself the happiness of finding several of yours. My next will be

[1] He was at Coblenz May 25.

from Cologne. The French here have not as yet made their detachment for Germany; but I believe they will do it in a few days after they shall know I am gone. I acquaint you with this, flattering myself that you take part in what concerns me so much, as this detachment will do; *for according to the forces they shall send from hence, I shall have the more or less success where I am a-going.* Your kindness has given me so much heart, that if the Germans can hinder the French from joining more troops to the Elector of Bavaria till I get thither, I do not doubt with the blessing of God but we shall have good success, *for the troops I carry with me are very good, and will do whatever I will have them*; I do from my soul wish that we may have a good success for many reasons, but for none so much as that I may end my days in happiness with you, my dearest soul.

Marlborough to Godolphin

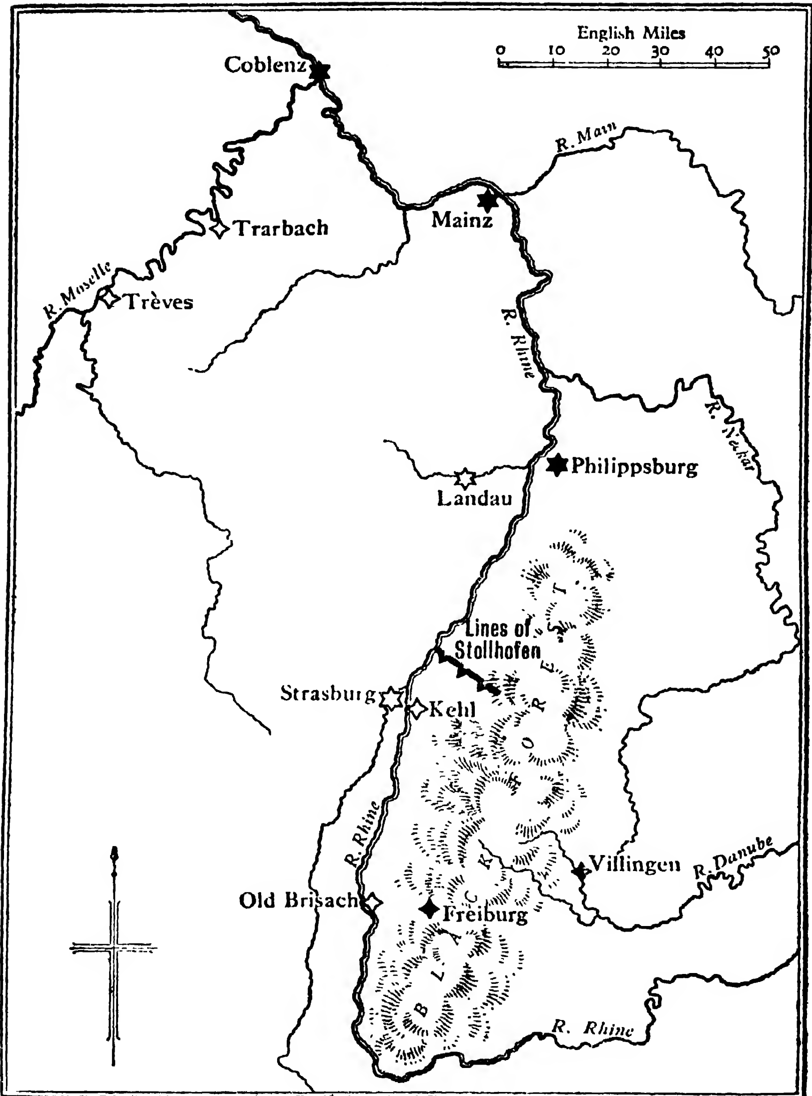
MAESTRICHT
May 15, 1704

*The news here is that the Maréchal de Villeroy has named the regiments that are designed for the Moselle, they will be to the number of 15,000 men.[1] If they send no more, *and there be no misfortune in Germany before I get to the Danube*, I hope we may have success. . . .

Louis XIV had prepared himself to renew the war on all his eight fronts. He and his Marshals in the north and east took it for granted that the initiative rested with them, and from January to March they indulged in the agreeable exercise of choosing where they should throw their weight, what regions to invade, and what fortresses to capture. They surveyed with satisfaction the results of 1703. Trèves and Trarbach, now in their hands, gave them the control of the Moselle. The capture of Landau secured the Upper Rhine. The capture of Kehl and Old Brisach gave them good gateways into Germany. Thus many alternatives were open.

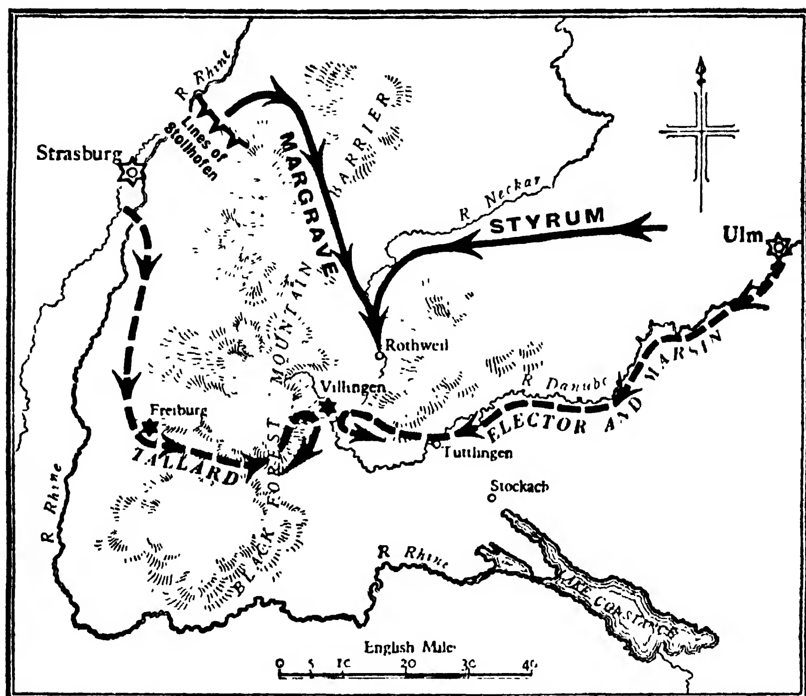
Very long letters were written by the Marshals Villeroy, Tallard, and Marsin to each other and to Chamillart, the Minister of War, and from time to time these letters were answered at equal length by the King. The longest of all were written by Marshal Tallard. In an easy, graceful style, observing the fullest etiquette of old-world gentlemen to one another, and with the profound ceremony due to the first of gentlemen and the first of kings, they discoursed agreeably upon the forthcoming operations. It was a pity the letters took so long to go to and fro; but when one is controlling such great events there should be time for calm procedure. There was no doubt that Max Emmanuel must be reinforced. Marsin's army had

[1] Villeroy actually took 21,000.



FRENCH CONTROL OF THE UPPER RHINE

received neither recruits nor remounts for nearly a year. He needed strong drafts for all branches, including especially armourers with their flints, etc., to repair the muskets and technical stores. Thus replenished, he and Max Emmanuel believed that they could attack Nördlingen and Nuremberg in the early summer and thus make

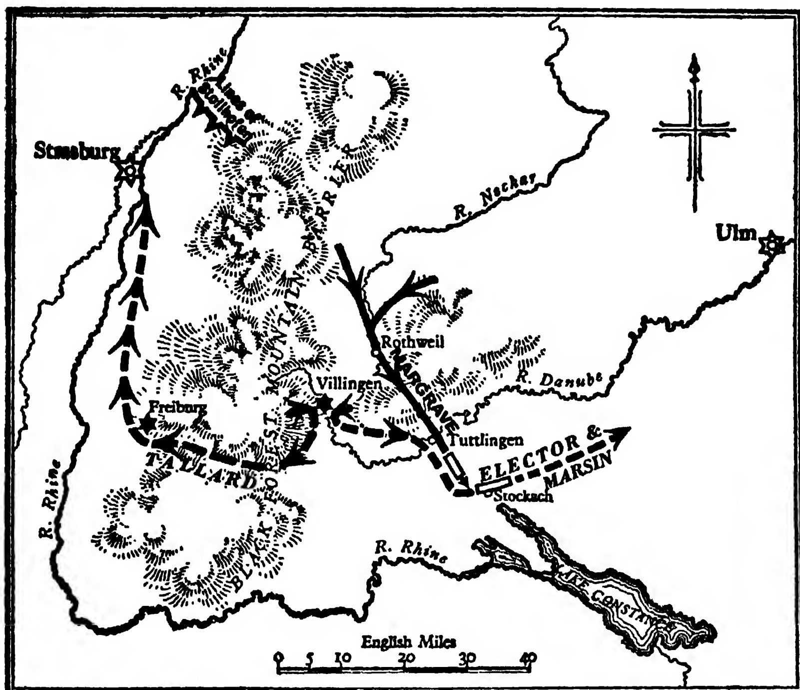


TALLARD PASSES THE DRAFTS TO BAVARIA

secure the foundation for an advance which would eventually carry them to Vienna. It was settled that Villeroy should stand on the defensive in the Low Countries, and that Germany should be attacked both by Tallard down the Upper Rhine and by Marsin and the Elector down the Danube. The strong combined offensive in the Italian theatre already proposed should at the same time be launched by Vendôme, by his brother, the Grand Prior, and by La Feuillade upon the Duke of Savoy. The first step of all these operations was the reinforcement of Marsin and the Elector. For this Marshal Tallard assumed the responsibility.

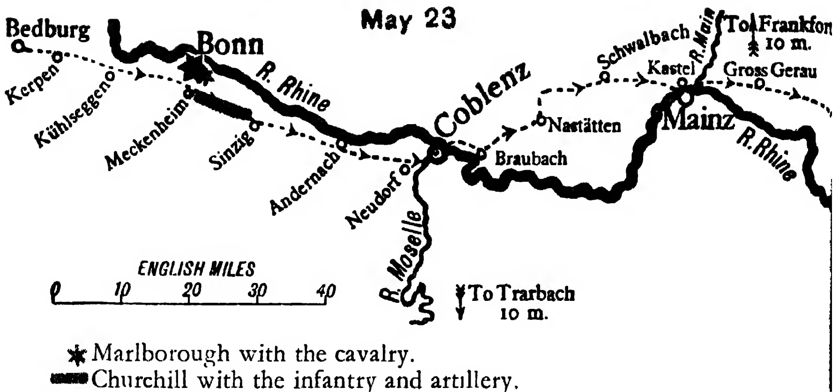
Thus the campaign opened in the south. The Elector of Bavaria, with Marshal Marsin, had constructed a strong entrenched camp

astride the Danube below Ulm. Here, almost surrounded by ramparts and flowing water, they lay with a Franco-Bavarian army of forty thousand men, representing the depleted units of a much larger force. The first step in the main French design was to raise this army to its proper strength. For this purpose Marshal Tallard



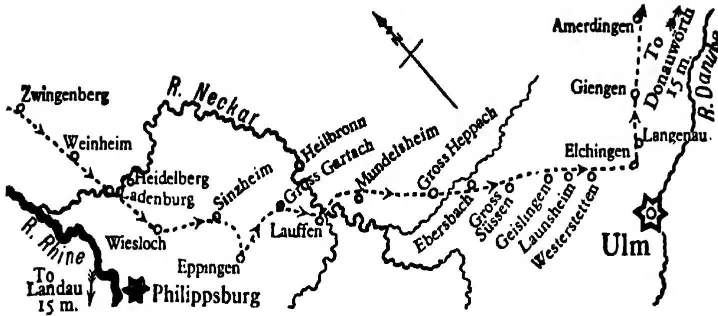
THE MARGRAVE MISSES THE ELECTOR

had collected drafts of ten thousand men at Strasburg. It was arranged that he should try to pass these troops through the Black Forest towards Ulm under the protection of his own army of eighteen thousand men, and that the Elector should meet them on the way with an adequate force and ample supplies. Accordingly on May 4 the Elector and Marsin, leaving fourteen thousand men around Ulm, marched westward with thirty thousand men and an enormous convoy of wagons, intending to take over the reinforcements from Tallard near Villingen. The army of the Margrave, Prince Louis of Baden, also about thirty thousand strong, was spread along the Upper Rhine mainly in the Lines of Stollhofen, while his lieutenant, Count Styrum, with ten thousand men, watched the Elector at Ulm. Styrum thought he had a chance, in spite of his smaller



numbers, of striking at the Elector as he wended westward, accompanied by his heavy convoy. But the Margrave, wishing to make sure, set out from Stollhofen with two-thirds of his force to join him, and forbade the attack till he arrived. He united with Styrum on May 19; but it was then too late. The Elector had already reached the neighbourhood of Villingen, and was in touch with Tallard. That Marshal had started from Strasburg on the 13th. He had slipped by the fortress of Freiburg, running the gauntlet of its cannon at six hundred yards in the darkness of night without loss of life. He had brought the drafts safely through the Black Forest, and during the 19th and 20th handed them over to the Elector and Marsin.

The united Franco-Bavarian army was now somewhat superior to that of the Margrave, forty thousand against thirty thousand. But the new drafts were not yet incorporated, and the convoy was a burden. The Margrave therefore planned to strike at the Elector while his long columns were passing through the defile of Stockach, in the difficult country north of Lake Constance. This promised great results, for the Bavarians were short of food, and the pass narrow. He was, however, again too late, and after their rearguard had been engaged in a brisk cannonade on May 24, the Elector and Marsin returned successfully with their reinforcements to their stronghold north of Ulm. Thus by the end of May Tallard had succeeded in reinforcing the Franco-Bavarian army to a total of fifty thousand men. The Margrave was blamed for his double failure to interfere with this concentration. He continued with his main force opposite Ulm, while Tallard, his mission accomplished, resumed his station on the Upper Rhine. The first move in the French plan was thus completed.



Meanwhile, however, in Flanders, two hundred and fifty miles away to the northward, something had happened which immediately attracted and thenceforward dominated the attention of all the French commanders. A scarlet caterpillar,[1] upon which all eyes were at once fixed, began to crawl steadfastly day by day across the map of Europe, dragging the whole war along with it. During the early part of May it became apparent to the French that Marlborough was dividing the allied forces in Flanders into two armies, one of which, under Overkirk, lay around Maestricht, while the other was assembling at Bedburg and might amount to twenty thousand men, and certainly included the bulk of the English. On May 19, the same day when at the other end of the theatre Tallard was passing his reinforcements to the Elector, this new army began to march towards the Rhine. On the 21st it was at Kuhlseggen. On the 23rd it was at Sinzig, and evidently moving towards Coblenz. It was also known that Marlborough was at its head. The natural conclusion of the French High Command was that he intended a campaign on the Moselle, with the fortresses of Trarbach and Trèves as his immediate targets. The very moment that his movement up the Rhine had become apparent Villeroy, leaving Bedmar with twenty-five thousand men to face Overkirk, started with twenty-one thousand men through the Ardennes for the new scene of operations. He wrote to Versailles explaining that "there was only danger at the point where the Duke in person stood at the head of the allied troops."[2] On May 27 the Marshal was at Arlon, forty miles from Trèves.[3]

[1] This epithet is justified by the variety of tints in red, scarlet, and crimson prevailing in the British uniforms of the period.

[2] Villeroy to Chamillart, May 18; Pelet. [3] See also general map facing p. 990.

Tallard was also returning to Strasburg from the south. The French thus conceived themselves not ill-arranged to meet Marlborough along the Moselle; but obviously Tallard could not quit the Rhine until Marlborough was definitely committed to the Moselle. Nor, of course, could the Elector and Marsin begin their march upon Nördlingen and Nuremberg while everything had been thrown into such uncertainty in the north.

The French plan of campaign which had opened propitiously must now be held in suspense. Marsin on the Danube, Tallard on the Rhine, Villeroy on the Moselle, Bedmar on the Meuse—all stood still, waiting with strained attention upon Marlborough's movements. From the very outset, therefore, the initiative had passed from the whole line of French armies to the English commander. The pressure upon Overkirk had been relieved by Villeroy's departure, and Flanders was safe. A respite had been gained for Franconia. But the French hoped that this disconcerting check to their plans would not last long. The Englishman was marching fast, and would surely turn up the Moselle at Coblenz. At this stage we may leave the French Marshals and the Great King waiting and guessing while precious days slip by, and return to Marlborough and his army.

On May 16 Marlborough had set out from Maestricht to overtake his troops. On the 18th, near Bedburg, he passed them in review. It must ever be a source of pride to the British nation that the force which began the famous movement consisted almost entirely of our fellow-countrymen. It comprised at this outset, and for the greater part of the march, 14 battalions, and 19 squadrons, representing England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and the English Artillery, with 20 foreign squadrons, in all about nineteen thousand men. Since these few redcoats changed the history of Europe and indeed of the world, it is right their regiments should be recorded here. (See opposite page.)

The actual detachment of the armies and the first few marches from Bedburg were alarming for the Flanders front. Villeroy, with forty-six thousand men still concentrated, was superior to Overkirk, with fifty thousand dispersed on the defensive. He made a demonstration in force towards Huy, and the Veldt-Marshal, believing himself about to be attacked, sent an urgent appeal to Marlborough to return. The Duke, convinced that, since his own movement was now pronounced, Villeroy would have to keep pace with him, sent

only a soothing reply and marched on. In forty-eight hours the danger phase had passed. Villeroy was hastening southward, and Overkirk was relieved from all anxiety. On the 22nd Marlborough received a call for succour from the opposite quarter. The Margrave, who believed that Tallard had already returned from the south and

BRITISH TROOPS WHICH TOOK PART IN THE MARCH TO THE DANUBE AND THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

Title in 1704	*Later Titles*
Lumley's	1st King's Dragoon Guards.
Wood's	3rd Dragoon Guards.
Cadogan's	5th Dragoon Guards.
Wyndham's	6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers).
Schomberg's	7th Dragoon Guards.
Lord J. Hay's	2nd Dragoons; the Royal Scots Greys.
Ross's	5th Dragoons; 5th Royal Irish Lancers.
1st Battn. 1st Guards	Grenadier Guards.
Orkney's	1st and 2nd Battns., 1st Foot; the Royal Scots.
Churchill's	3rd Foot, the Buffs; (East Kent Regiment).
Webb's	8th Foot; the King's (Liverpool) Regiment.
North and Grey's	10th Foot; the Lincolnshire Regiment.
Howe's	15th Foot; the East Yorkshire Regiment.
Derby's	16th Foot; the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.
Hamilton's	18th Foot; the Royal Irish Regiment.
Rowe's	21st Foot; the Royal Scots Fusiliers.
Ingoldsby's	23rd Foot; the Royal Welch Fusiliers.
Marlborough's	24th Foot; the South Wales Borderers.
Ferguson's	26th Foot, the Cameronians; (the Scottish Rifles).
Meredith's	37th Foot; the Hampshire Regiment.

Also the Artillery and Engineers.

was moving to attack the denuded Lines of Stollhofen, sent an alarming message. In response to these opposite tensions Marlborough ordered the Prussian and Hanoverian contingents which were to join him later on his march to strengthen the troops in the Stollhofen lines. As soon as he was certain of Villeroy's southward movement he wrote to the States-General assuring them that Overkirk and Holland were perfectly safe, and urging them to send him the strongest reinforcements they could.[1]

[1] Allison writes (i, 147), "Villeroy with the French forces on the Meuse retired before him [Marlborough] to the Moselle, and eluded all attempts to bring him to battle."

In this he found unexpected support. To his surprise and pleasure he learned that Overkirk and his generals had in fact—on their own motion—already asked the States-General to be allowed to send 8 battalions and 21 squadrons of Danish troops to him. At Bonn, which he reached on the 23rd, he heard that Tallard had succeeded in sending the drafts through to Marsin. This evil news was exaggerated. It was reported that twenty-six thousand reinforcements had joined the Elector. The gravity of these tidings is revealed in his letters. This was an hour of great personal stress. He did not know yet whether the States-General would allow the Danish troops to join him. If they did not, and if Tallard had really passed twenty-six thousand men to the Elector, he felt that he might reach the Danube only to be "overpowered by numbers." No letter is more grim than the one he writes from Bonn, which fortress he spent the day of the 23rd in inspecting. The only result of these ugly tales and unknown factors was to make him push forward rapidly with the whole of his cavalry in order to emphasize the strategic impression and consequences he knew his march into Germany must produce.

Marlborough to Godolphin

CAMP OF BEDBURG
May 19, 1704

*Having none of yours to answer nor no letters from Germany since my last, I having nothing to write but that I am got hither and in good health, *this little army resting this day*, the Bishop of Raab and several others from Cologne have sent me word they will dine with me. I am very impatient of hearing from you, having none since the 21st of the last month, which were full of the resolution Lord Nottingham had taken [*i.e.*, to go when thrust out]. I confess I must always be of opinion the Queen deserved much better from him.

This minute I have received an express from Mons. Overkirk to acquaint me that the morning I left the Army the Maréchal de Villeroy detached for the Moselle 8 battalions and 16 squadrons [*i.e.*, five to six thousand men]; but they marched no farther than Namur, and as he thinks are come back to the Army. If they are, they must have received orders from Court to attempt something before they let the detachment march. The Dutch army is so well encamped that I do not apprehend the French can do them any hurt, or that they have such

This reveals the historian's complete misconception of what was happening. Villeroy was not retiring before Marlborough; nor was Marlborough attempting to bring him to battle. The two generals were moving on parallel lines a hundred miles apart, with the Ardennes between them, and Villeroy was two or three marches behind Marlborough, not before him.

a superiority as to undertake any siege. *If they would fool away 7 or 8 days it would be of great advantage to the expedition I am making.*

John to Sarah

CAMP OF KULSECKEN [KÜHLSEGGEN]
May 21, 1704

*My express is come back from Cologne without English letters, which makes me very uneasy; for I did not doubt but I should have found some there. I have received this morning an express from Prince Lewis of Baden that the French were using their utmost endeavours to join the Elector of Bavaria, so that I have taken my resolution of taking all the horse with me, and leaving the foot to march with the cannon, so that I hope to be at Mayence the 29th of this month. But you shall hear again of me at Coblenz a-Sunday [May 25], for I hope to have a bridge over the Rhine by that time. Before you receive this I believe you will hear that the French have sent a great number of their troops towards Germany, and I am assured that the Marshal de Villeroy will march with them. *Let them send what they will, I have great hopes God will bless this undertaking*; I am heart and soul yours.

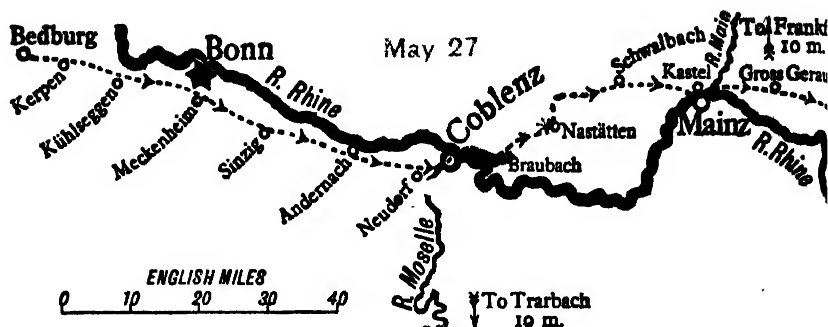
Marlborough to Godolphin

BONN
May 23, 1704

*I left the Army on their march this morning to see this place, and shall join them at their camp this evening. I received by express last night from Frankfort the ill news of the French having joined the Elector of Bavaria at Villingen with 26,000 men; so that if I had not marched with this detachment, the Elector was to have marched to Vienna with an army of 30,000 and have left the rest under the command of the Maréchal Marsin; which they reckon to be 30,000 more; *but I hope they are mistaken, or we shall pass our time ill*; for it is most certain that the Maréchal de Villeroy is marching with the best of the troops from Flanders. So that *if the Dutch do not consent to the strengthening the troops I have, we shall be overpowered by numbers.* For you may see plainly by this march of Mons. Villeroy that they will do all they can to support the Elector of Bavaria.

I think it might be for the service if Mons. de Vriberg were spoke to in the Queen's name; to press the States for the assisting the Empire this campaign with what troops they possibly could. They might strengthen me, and not much weaken their army, if they would draw one-half of their troops out of their garrisons, which they might do, since the French have no army in Flanders, that can give them the least apprehension. I am in such haste that I can only write two words to Lady Marl. and refer her to your letter.

Before this news I had taken the resolution of advancing with



the horse, and now shall do it with all expedition, so that I hope to be at Mayence a-Wednesday night or Thursday morning.

John to Sarah

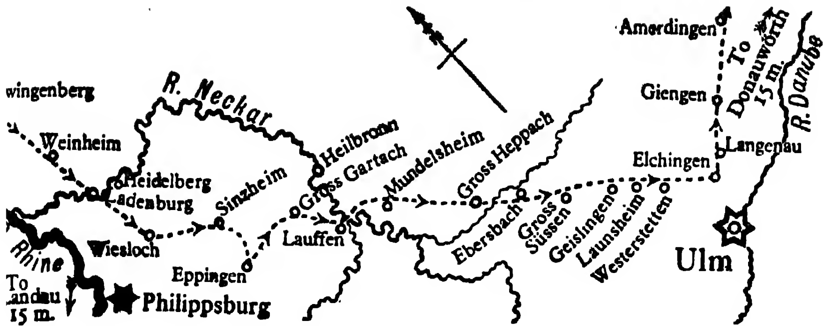
BRAUBACH
May 27, 1704

*I had yesterday by the Dutch post the ill news of a Packet boat being taken, by which I am afraid I have lost one or more of your dear letters. I had yesterday an express from Prince Lewis, in which he acquaints me that he hopes the next day he may engage the Enemy. I have sent the copy of the letter, so that Lord Treasurer may acquaint you with the contents of it. If flattery could make me happy, Count Wratislaw, that came to me yesterday, has said so much from the Emperor that I am ashamed to repeat it to you; but I hope the Queen will have the good effects of it; for it is certain that if these troops I bring had not come to his [the Emperor's] assistance, he would have run great risk of losing his Crown, which he seems to be very sensible of.

I have also the satisfaction of receiving marks of the friendship of the Dutch Generals in Flanders; for I had an express yesterday from Monsr Auverkerke [Overkirk] to acquaint me that they had written to the States, to desire they might immediately have power to send me 20 squadrons of horse and 8 Regiments of foot: for they were of opinion that no success in Flanders could make amends for any ill accident that might happen to me, for want of having more troops. I know you are so concerned in anything that makes me easy or uneasy, that I would not omit the letting you know this: for tho the ignorance of the States may hinder any troops coming to me, yet I am very much pleased with the expression of friendship the Generals have made me.

If you can recollect what was in those letters which are lost I shall take it very kindly if you will write it again, for I would not lose one word that comes from you.[1]

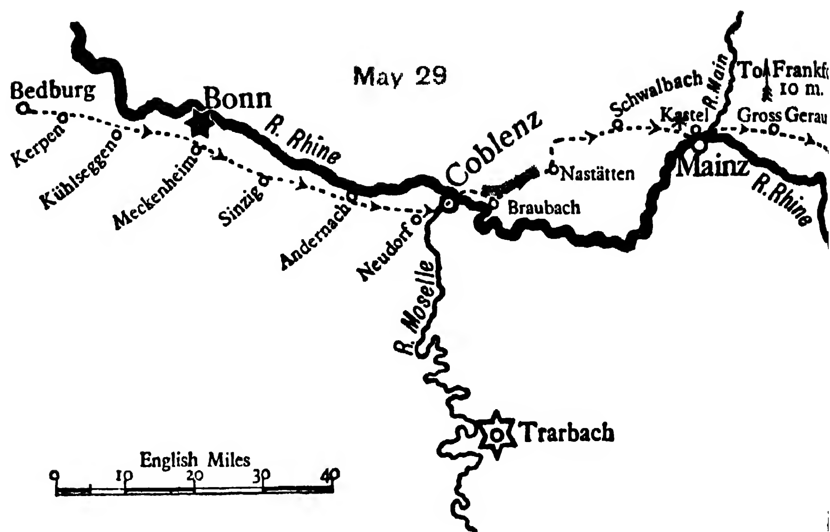
[1] Partly in Coxe, i, 328.



Few cities in Europe are more strikingly placed than Coblenz. It stands opposite the majestic rock-fortress of Ehrenbreitstein on the long tongue of land formed by the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle. No one can visit this spot and watch the gleaming Moselle mingle in the broad, swelling flood of the larger river without feeling its geographical significance. Captain Parker and Sergeant Millner both describe the dramatic moment when, after marching thus far with the Rhine on their left hand, and crossing the Moselle by the stone bridge, they saw that, instead of turning to the right up the tributary towards France, the long column held on by the Rhine for another mile, and then lo! on the left lay two bridges of boats[1] across which the battalions were swiftly filing deeper into Germany. All day long the passage of the Rhine continued, and by nightfall on the 29th the British foot and cannon had been swallowed up in the hills and gorges upon the farther side. Marlborough and the cavalry were already two marches ahead.

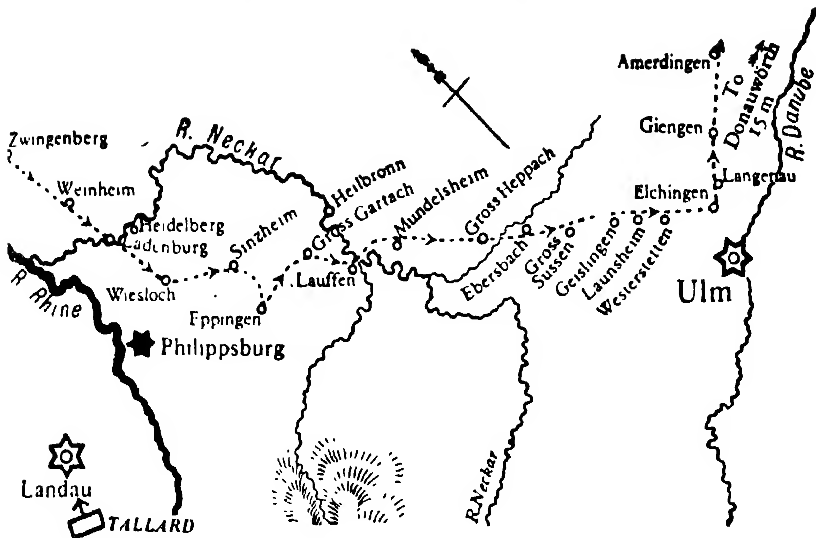
In those days espionage was easy. All the frontiers could be passed by individuals. The great bulk of the populations took no part in the war, and we must suppose that the French agents mingled with the Coblenz crowds on this day. They had seen the bridges built across the Rhine. They had seen the cavalry pass over, but these might be merely pretences. What they had to report was which turning the infantry and artillery took. Now they knew. In the hostels of back-streets men mounted their horses and rode westward into the night along the Moselle. Ride, horsemen, ride! Ride to Villeroy, to Tallard, and on to Paris, bearing news of high consequence. "There will be no campaign upon the Moselle. The English have all gone higher up into Germany."

[1] Almost at the same point where the bridge of boats lies to-day.



So here again there opened upon the French command another set of uncertainties and another series of delays. It was three days before Marlborough's cavalry struck the Rhine again at Mainz. Here also no doubt they did not lack attendants; and now from several points along the river pregnant information came to the French command. The Duke's army was following the right bank of the Rhine. He had crossed the Main. The Hessian artillery which the Landgrave had prepared for a campaign on the Moselle had already arrived at Mannheim. But, most significant of all, bridges were being constructed across the Rhine by the governor of Philippsburg. Here, then, it seemed, was the Englishman's object at last exposed. His campaign was to be in Alsace, and the strong fortress of Landau, taken and retaken already in the war, fifteen miles from the river opposite Philippsburg, on the Queich stream, was no doubt the first objective. Hence the Hessian artillery at Mannheim, and the pontoon bridge by Philippsburg. Hence the recent reinforcements by the Prussian and Hanoverian detachments of the thinly held Lines of Stollhofen.

This prospect was not unwelcome to the French. On the contrary, it offered them simpler and less menacing propositions than a campaign on the Moselle. Tallard was already near Landau. Villeroy had been marching towards him ever since he heard that Marlborough had turned across the Rhine at Coblenz. The two Marshals,



who now each had at least twenty-two thousand men, were in a position to form a strong army to dispute the siege of Landau or resist an invasion of Alsace. Moreover, once this fascinating enemy had engaged himself before Landau or otherwise in that region, the Elector and Marsin could begin their offensive in Germany, with the capital of the Empire as its final goal. "We shall know for certain," thought these experienced soldiers, "once Marlborough has crossed the Neckar." And to the Neckar he was evidently making his way. So once again they paused and watched and waited. Tallard alone spoke of a possible design which might reach to the Danube.

Marlborough had been received with the highest ceremony and a triple salute of cannon by the Elector of Trèves, most of whose country was in the hands of the enemy, and he dined with him in the castle of Ehrenbreitstein on the 26th, while his cavalry and dragoons were defiling beneath them across the floating bridges. At his camp at Neudorf he had been joined by Wratislaw on behalf of the Empire, by M. d'Almelo, the envoy of the States-General, and, perhaps most important of all at this moment, by Mr Davenant, the English agent at Frankfort. Frankfort now played an important part in his schemes. It was his advanced financial base. Here were those ample English credits, so faithfully fed by Godolphin, which

enabled the English commander to pay cash for everything and to supply all ranks with their pay and allowances. On this depended the discipline and smooth movement of his army. The German countryside and townsfolk had seen and heard much of war, but an army that paid its way, pillaged nothing, and seemed so orderly and good-tempered, was a novel experience. And since they recognized this army for their deliverers they hastened with not unnatural enthusiasm to aid its march and supply.

Once across the Rhine the scarlet caterpillar progressed amid flowers and blessings. The British troops felt the same thrills as rewarded their descendants when at the end of 1918 they drove the enemy before them through Belgium and the liberated provinces of France. But now it was no devastated region but the beautiful, smiling Rhine valley in the glory of summer which welcomed the marching columns of horse and foot with every sign of gratitude and admiration. Then, as in later times, the costly excellence of the British equipment attracted attention. Until late in the nineteenth century a 'Marlbrouck' meant in these districts a wagon of exceptional strength and quality. Bouquets and waving of ribbons, friendly helpful hands, and bands of smiling women and girls—"some of them much handsomer," says Captain Pope characteristically, "than we expected to find in this country"—cheered the long marches.[1] High and low, from prince to peasant, the Germans greeted their rescuers. And around all an embracing forethought, at once sure and easy, provided for all their needs.

In this surprising journey nothing seemed to have been forgotten. Parker says:

> We frequently marched three sometimes four days successively and halted one day. We generally began our march about three in the morning, proceeded about four leagues or four and a half by day, and reached our ground about nine. As we marched through the countries of our allies, commissars were appointed to furnish us with all manner of necessaries for man and horse; these were brought to the ground before we arrived, and the soldiers had nothing to do but to pitch their tents, boil their kettles and lie down to rest. Surely never was such a march carried on with more order and regularity and with less fatigue both to man and horse.[2]

But Marlborough's agent, Mr Davenant, with the English gold and credits at Frankfort, had much to do with this. The Duke had been able to make very considerable arrangements in Frankfort

[1] Cowper Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 36.

[2] Parker, pp. 80–81.

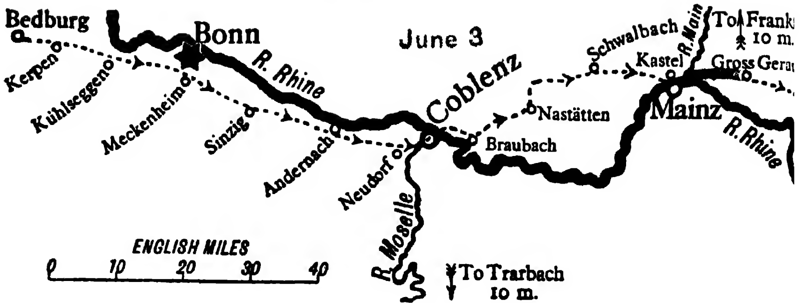
which nevertheless wore the appearance of being directed to the Moselle. He was able to tell General Churchill to order from Frankfort all the replacements and spare equipment which were necessary. A complete outfit of new shoes for the whole army had been secretly prepared at Frankfort for issue to the troops. The saddlery of the cavalry was similarly kept in the highest condition, and in every particular the British and all other forces in the Queen's pay were maintained as they deserved. These continual evidences of design unfolding day after day bred in all ranks that faith in their commander which, once rooted, is hard to destroy, while at the same time the eyes of a grateful population convinced the soldiers of the righteousness of their cause. Their professional spirit was strengthened by a new morale, and while Marlborough's stinginess kept strict account of all expenses, the housekeeping of the army was good and ample. Well might he write to Sarah, "The troops I carry with me are very good, and will do whatever I will have them."

"I send to-morrow to Frankfort," Marlborough wrote to Godolphin,

> to see if I can take up a month's pay for the English, and shall draw the bills on Mr Sweet; for notwithstanding the continual marching, the men are extremely pleased with this expedition, so that I am sure you will take all the care possible that they may not want.[1]

Thus this march is remarkable among military operations both for the detail in which it had been prepared and the secrecy and mystery in which it was shrouded from the enemy. Alike for its audacity and forethought, alike for its strategic swiftness and day-to-day comfort, it was a model which in those days had no copies. We wonder how it was done when organization by our standards was so primitive, and the staff employed so small. None of those large departments of A (Adjutant-General), G (General Staff), and Q (Quartermaster-General) existed. In fact, the full classification was not to be made for two hundred years of military history. Four or five men, each with no more than as many clerks and officers around them, handled the whole affair. Cadogan, Cardonnel, Davenant, stand out almost alone at this stage as Marlborough's managers. He had picked them all carefully and tried them long. He must have kept the whole central grip in his own mind largely without any written record. All were men of high quality in their different functions, and each accepted without

[1] Mainz, May 29; Coxe, i, 331.

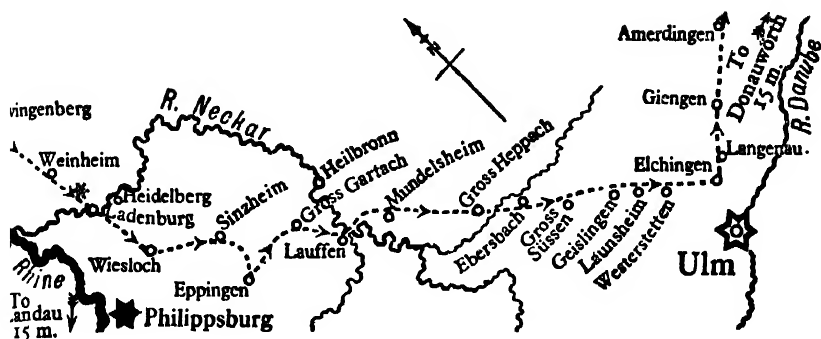


question the orders they received from their chief. No doubt they consulted together where necessary, but not one of them at this time, except Cardonnel, knew where he was going or what he meant to do. Each functioned perfectly and with confidence within the limits of the task assigned from week to week, nor questioned arrangements, the purpose of which could not be seen.

Not less remarkable was Marlborough's Intelligence. In these days between Coblenz and Mainz in the camp at Neustadt Mr Cardonnel received an important letter from a friend at Celle. The letter and its enclosures have vanished, but their purport can be judged by Cardonnel's answer. "This serves," he wrote, "chiefly to thank you for your two letters which accompanied Mons de Chamillart's Memorial and du Breuil's examination. With regard to the former, you know already that the most considerable point they concerted —viz., the junction—has had its effect, without a blow being struck, before the Prince of Baden had joined the troops, and while he had given positive orders that they should not act before his arrival: *we find, however, the utmost designs of the enemy, in this memorial, and I hope we shall be able to traverse them.*"[1]

This fragment opens a loophole on Marlborough's elaborate secret service. The agent in Celle, a man name Robethon, had raised himself from a humble origin to become the confidential secretary of the Elector of Brunswick. Here he was well placed with the approval of his master to gather information, and Marlborough kept him supplied with large sums of money for several years with excellent results. He had now forwarded the entire French plan of campaign to Cardonnel. Napoleon's historian makes the following sub-acid comment: "We must conclude from this

[1] Lediard, i, 300.



significant paper that the feeble Chamillart, occupying the post of Louvois without having either his vigour or his talent, had let himself be robbed of the secret of the campaign plan. Nothing is beyond the reach of the power of gold, and it looks as if Marlborough, although blamed for avarice, knew how to spend money to some point. As clever at piercing the hidden designs of his enemy as in beating him on the field of battle, he united the cunning of the fox to the force of the lion."[1]

Here was the French plan, part executed and the rest to come, filched or bribed from the cabinet of the War Minister in Paris, deciphered in Celle,[2] sent to Cardonnel by long circuitous routes through France and Germany, and laid upon Marlborough's camp table in his tent at Neustadt. Oddly enough, this priceless information added nothing to his knowledge. He had learned it already by his finger-tips. It only confirmed what his occult common sense had divined. But it must have been none the less very reassuring.

Thus the columns rippled along the roads as the scarlet caterpillar beat the ground rhythmically with its feet. Up the hills and down the hills, through the forests and gorges, across the Main and across the Neckar, always wending on, while the Great King and his Marshals readjusted their views from week to week, and Europe from one end to the other became conscious of an impending event.

Marlborough had insisted that Wratislaw should be at his side as his *liaison* with the Emperor, the Margrave, Eugene, and the German princes. "For as I have revealed my heart to you," he wrote to the envoy on May 20, ". . . I depend for good success largely on your zeal. . . ."[3] Wratislaw rejoined him at Neudorf,

[1] Duterns and Madgett, *Histoire de Jean Churchill*, i, 293. [2] *Dispatches*, i, 285.
[3] *Ibid.*, 269.

and here the Duke made it clear that he expected him to make the campaign with him. Wratislaw feared that if a disagreement occurred between the generals the blame would be thrown on him. But Marlborough would have none of this. Wratislaw was in the business, and must take the rough with the smooth. He stirred the Elector of Mainz, a sincere devotee of the Empire, in whose palaçe they were entertained a few days later, to back his demands. He had already made formal application to Vienna through Mr Stepney.[1] "I must acquaint you that as I am now going to Prince Louis and have no manner of acquaintance either with him or his generals, . . . I have prevailed with Count Wratislaw, though he be very impatient to return home, to go along with me for some time." The Emperor decided that Wratislaw must abide with Marlborough. "He ought to be there," said the Emperor, "to ensure that Marlborough undertakes and completes the operations decided upon."

On June 3 Marlborough's cavalry, now reinforced by various allied contingents from the German states to eighty squadrons, crossed the Neckar at Ladenburg by the floating bridge and encamped on the other side. Here he halted for three days.

John to Sarah

WEINHEIM
June 2

I take it extreme kindly that you persist in desiring to come to me; but I am sure when you consider that three days hence will be a month that the troops have been in a continual march to get hither, and we shall be a fortnight longer before we shall be able to get to the Danube, so that you could hardly get to me and back again to Holland, before it would be time to return into England. Besides, my dear soul, how could I be at any ease? for if we should not have good success, I could not put you into any place where you would be safe.

I am now in a house of the elector palatine, that has a prospect over the finest country that is possible to be seen. I see out of my chamber window the Rhine and the Neckar, and his two principal towns of Mannheim and Heidelberg; *but would be much better pleased with the prospect of St Albans, which is not very famous for seeing far.*[2]

From his next camp at Ladenburg he wrote the letters which revealed for the first time his true destination both to the States-General and to his brother. The Queen of England, he told their High Mightinesses, had commanded him to go to the aid of the Empire, and accordingly he was marching to the Danube. He

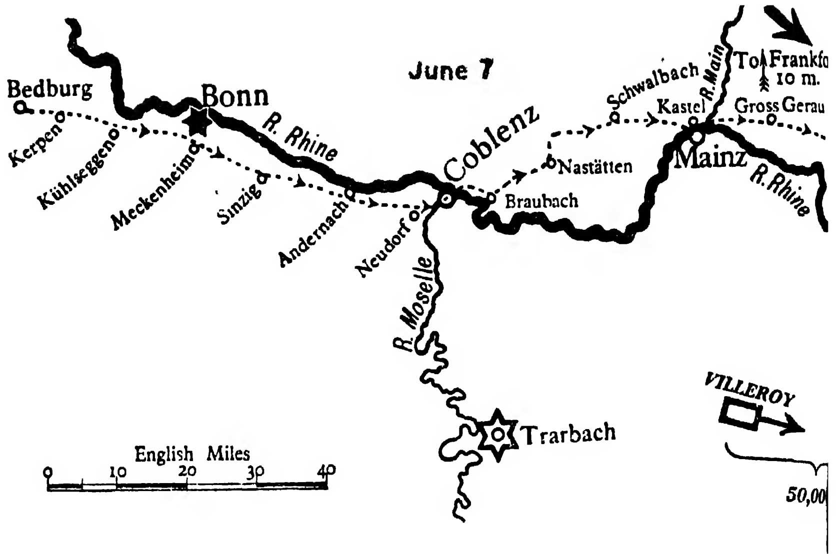
[1] *Dispatches*, i, 288. [2] Coxe, i, 333.

appealed to them to allow their troops in his army—the Danish contingent and certain Dutch detachments he had collected on his march—to share the honour of this memorable expedition. To Churchill he sent orders to march direct upon Heidelberg, as the Ladenburg road was difficult for the cannon.

On June 6 Marlborough advanced to Wiesloch, only a day's march from Philippsburg and the Rhine. He was now within thirty miles of the enemy at Landau, and he knew that both Villeroy and Tallard might be very near that fortress. Moreover, the moment was come when the final veil must be lifted to the French. Hitherto Marlborough had always possessed the power to return at superior speed to Flanders. He had gathered a mass of boats on the Rhine, and by embarking his infantry therein could transport them back downstream at a rate of at least eighty miles a day. It was this curious feature of the military problem which, while it comforted the Dutch, was so baffling to Villeroy. Till Marlborough had passed at least Coblenz he could not be sure that the whole march was not a feint to lure him from Flanders, whither he could only return at one-eighth Marlborough's potential speed on the current of the Rhine. This possibility had renewed itself at Mannheim. Now, however, the next march would remove all protecting doubts. Marlborough therefore halted for three days to allow Churchill with the infantry and cannon to overtake him. It was not till the 7th, when his brother was only two marches away, that he moved again, this time in the direction which finally revealed his purpose. He turned sharply east to Sinzheim, which no doubt he remembered from the days of Turenne, and headed openly for the Danube. Once again the messengers sped to the French headquarters.

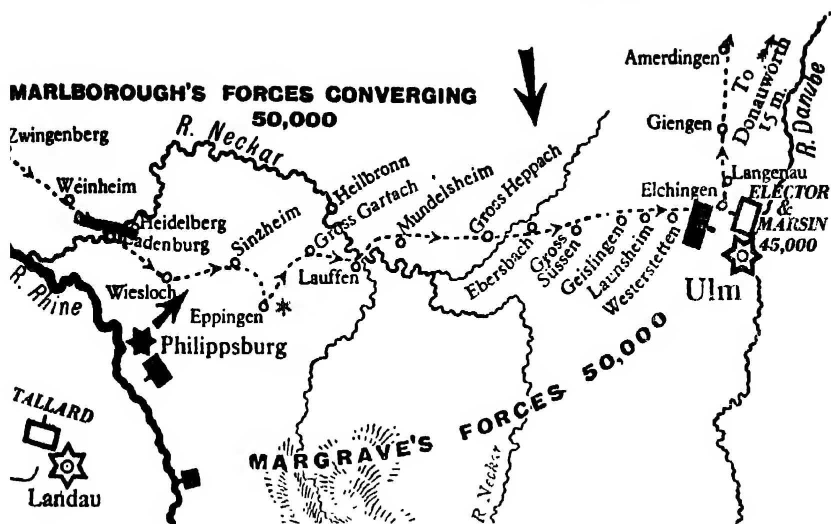
The news that Marlborough had crossed not only the Rhine but the Main created a profound sensation at Versailles. The King insistently directed the two Marshals together to frame and submit to him a plan of succour for the Elector in the event of the armies of Marlborough and the Margrave actually uniting. As soon as Villeroy was sure that Marlborough was not coming up the Moselle he had crossed that river, and marched through Lorraine towards the Upper Rhine. On June 7 the Marshals met in conference at Zweibrücken. Together they commanded between fifty and sixty thousand men. They had before them the King's demand for a plan in case Marlborough should really go to the Danube: and now the news reached them that this was certainly where he was going.

While the Marshals had waited and wondered, while they



interchanged anxious messages with Paris, while they canvassed every possibility, the strategic situation had been gradually but remorselessly transformed. All Marlborough's calculations had been justified. Villeroy had not attacked the weakened Dutch, but had been drawn south, first to the Moselle and then to the Upper Rhine. The Dutch had been obliged by the force of facts to accept and condone Marlborough's movement and to reinforce him against their wishes up to the limits he required. He was now in Swabia with the power to concentrate nearly fifty thousand men, and in sure and easy contact with the Margrave, whose forces at Stollhofen and opposite Ulm, together with various detachments, were of about the same strength. Allied armies of about a hundred thousand men stood in harmonious relation in a central position between the Rhine and the Danube, while the two enemy armies, though not much inferior in numbers, lay at opposite sides of the circle, separated from each other by distance and stronger forces, and able to reinforce or join each other only by long and painful detours; and each was liable meanwhile to be attacked by overwhelming strength. Finally, Marlborough could soon, if need be, discard the whole of his communications by the Rhine and establish a new direct line of communication north-east behind him into Germany.

It was with consternation that the French chiefs felt the weight of these facts upon their well-trained military minds. Villeroy and

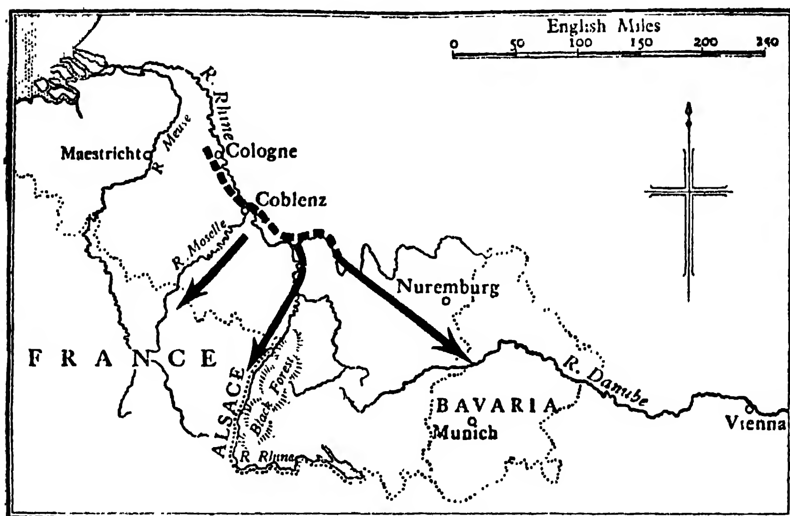


Tallard understood plainly the peril in which the army of the Elector and Marsin lay. That army, gathered for the march to Vienna, was now exposed to attack within a fortnight by very much stronger forces, many of whom had marched across Europe for that express purpose. Bavaria, the deserter state, lay open to invasion by the confederates her ruler had so grievously wronged. The two Marshals saw how easy it would be for Marlborough to leave one-third of the combined forces to hold them off on the Rhine, while he threw his main weight against their comrades on the Danube. But what to do?

The story of the next fortnight is one of futility and paralysis in the French High Command. The Marshals thrust their burden back upon the King. They sent him not one plan, but four, each with its own memorandum setting forth the grave or destructive objections to it. In mid-May they had been choosing between prizes: now there was only a choice of evils. Tallard began his covering letter with a disconcerting sentence. "In view of the superiority of the enemy forces between the Rhine and the Danube, assistance to Bavaria is so difficult as to appear almost an impossibility." In short, the Marshals avowed themselves completely baffled. Only the King could decide.

Louis XIV favoured the boldest of their alternatives—namely, to try to force the Rhine below Stollhofen and march down the Neckar valley towards Stuttgart. He expatiated on this in his letter

of the 12th, but, puzzled himself, he gave no positive orders. He invited further comments, to which the Marshals replied in two separate papers on the 18th. They made it clear to him that they would take no responsibility. "Your Majesty," wrote Villeroy, ". . . understands war better than those who have the honour to serve you." One has to search the annals of war to find so utter an



MARLBOROUGH'S SUCCESSIVE THREATS

obfuscation of a competent command. Yet the process by which it had been produced was, like many great things, simple and inevitable. How could they know that Marlborough would disdain the Moselle before he had crossed the Rhine at Coblenz; how could they be sure he would not double back to Flanders before them while he was still in touch with his flotillas on the Rhine; how could they know that he was not interested in Landau till he turned east at Wiesloch? And by that time it was too late. We have no doubt that he had foreseen these successive stages, inherent in the operation a long time before. These enduring uncertainties were, in fact, the mechanism by which alone he could reach the Danube. Thus the tables were completely turned, and nearly all the strategic advantages the French had enjoyed in the middle of May had been transferred to their opponents by the end of June. And this by manœuvres of almost equal forces without a shot fired in either siege or battle.

As early as June 5 the Elector had heard that Eugene was in the

field. He immediately divined that he had been sent from Vienna to attack him. He even foresaw the exact plan of campaign which would be used against him. That same day he wrote his supplication for help from Louis XIV. Marshal Marsin supported him by a more explicit letter two days later. It was no longer a question, said the Marshal, of strengthening the Franco-Bavarian army for offensive action, but of saving the Elector from being forced out of the war and the French troops with him from being cut off and destroyed. If the King did not send a new army to help him, but, on the contrary, his enemies received one, Max Emmanuel would in despair embark his wife, children, and treasure on the Danube to seek safety with the Hungarian rebels. "Monsieur," wrote Marsin, "judge of the condition of a prince who can fall back on no other resource to save his family!"

A third appeal was made by General Legalle, who reached Versailles from the Franco-Bavarian army on June 22 to plead their cause in person. He was received in audience by the King. Louis, deeply moved by his advocacy, demanded a written statement. The document exists in the French military archives. Legalle declared that Marlborough was not advancing to strengthen the army on the Upper Rhine, but against Bavaria. As Bavaria was a completely open country the enemy could enter with two armies—one down by the Danube, the other high up the Iller—"and in a very short time devastate the defenceless land." Moreover, the Elector's health was precarious. Were he to die, *his troops would desert to the enemy the very next day.* The disappearance or submission of the Elector would transfer 35 Bavarian battalions and 45 squadrons to the hostile armies, and the fate of all the French troops already in Bavaria would be sealed.

Legalle proceeded to urge a definite action. At any cost and without delay another army must be sent to the aid of the Elector through the Black Forest and preferably by the Kinzig valley. On this the King made up his mind. He consulted the Marshals, who were shirking their responsibilities, no further. On June 23 he sent his orders to Villeroy.

> It is then my intention that you, Marshal Tallard, and General Coigny should divide all my troops which you and they command in Alsace into three corps. That of Marshal Tallard, which is to advance over the mountains, should consist of 40 battalions and 50 squadrons which I have chosen . . . in the appended list. . . .
>
> The second army which you command should advance to Offenburg,

observe the enemy, retain them in the lines of Stollhofen, follow them into Alsace, or join Marshal Tallard with the whole or a part if they move all their troops towards the Danube. This army should be composed of at least 40 battalions and 68 or 70 squadrons.

The corps which Coigny is to command should consist of 10 or 12 battalions and the same number of squadrons; and will safeguard Alsace. The Swiss regiments, even my Swiss Guards, will form part of this corps, as I have no intention of forcing them to cross the Rhine against their will. . . .

You are to keep this plan as secret as possible . . . in concert with Marshal Tallard.[1]

The Marshals had asked for orders, and now they had got them. But when on June 27 they sat over these orders at Lagenkendal, they were filled with deep misgivings. Villeroy was deprecatory, but Tallard was outspoken. His complaint was bitter. The superior armies of the enemy between the Rhine and the Danube, he protested, would at any time be able to join together, while the French and Bavarian forces would be "always separated, in the air, and dependent on what the enemy decides to do." The infantry assigned to him was perhaps sufficient, but with only 50 squadrons of cavalry he declared his task impossible. Fifty more squadrons were required, and also the presence of an army in the Rhine Valley strong enough to prevent Eugene from leaving it. Unhappily, these forces did not exist. Thus Tallard.

I venture to say that in the circumstances Your Majesty can come to no decision which would not encounter extraordinary difficulties in view of the numerous hostile fighting forces between the Rhine and the Danube, which owing to their means of communication are always able to join up together, whereas the troops of Your Majesty and the Elector, always separated and without means of communication, are in the air. I shall therefore be entirely dependent on what the enemy decides to do, the more so as, being without contact with Bavaria, I cannot expect any help from that quarter.

If the army which Your Majesty has assigned to me could maintain itself independently—that is to say, if I had fifty additional squadrons of cavalry—and if at the same time an army were stationed in the Rhine valley, sufficiently large to hold Prince Eugene from entering Alsace or to follow him [if he went eastward], the Empire would fall: but as Your Majesty cannot do this, it is waste of time to discuss it. I venture only to say that with fifty squadrons of cavalry, which I am

[1] Pelet, iv, 496–497.

to have, a campaign cannot be undertaken. My infantry is sufficient, and in regard to that I have no misgiving.[1]

Nevertheless both the Marshals obeyed. Tallard crossed the Rhine at Kehl, and began his southward march around the long curve to Villingen on July 1. Villeroy followed him and took up his station at Offenburg. Thus at last a decision had been wrung from the French. But Marlborough had also moved.

[1] Pelet, iv, 507.

Chapter Sixteen

MARLBOROUGH AND EUGENE

1704—JUNE

MARLBOROUGH at Wiesloch credited the enemy with more clarity of view and decision than they possessed. He thought it probable that their answer to his march would be either a violent attack upon the Lines of Stollhofen or that very bridging of the Rhine and thrust into the valley of the Neckar towards Stuttgart that Louis XIV had favoured but had not resolved. He must set up a shield upon the Upper Rhine strong enough to give him time to come to conclusions with Bavaria. Moreover, his own position was complicated because the Danish reinforcements which the States-General had sent after him, without which he had not enough strength, were still nearly a fortnight behind him.

Towards the end of May Prince Eugene had left Vienna for the Margrave's headquarters at some distance before Ulm. Marlborough now sent Wratislaw to the Imperial camp to explain the situation and procure compliance with its needs. It is plain that he wished to have Eugene with him on the Danube, and that the Margrave should undertake the defence of the Rhine. But one or the other must go to the Rhine at once.

"Having received intelligence yesterday," he wrote to Godolphin on June 8,

> that in three or four days the Duke of Villeroy, with his army, would join that of the Marshal de Tallard about Landau, in order to force the passage of the Rhine, I prevailed with count Wratislaw to make all haste he could to prince Louis of Baden's army, where he will be this night, that he might make him sensible of the great consequence it is to hinder the French from passing that river, while we are acting against the Elector of Bavaria. I have also desired him to press, *and not to be refused*, that either prince Louis or prince Eugene go immediately to the Rhine. I am in hopes to know to-morrow what resolution they have taken. If I could decide it by my wishes, prince Eugene should stay on the Danube, although *prince Louis has assured me, by the*

count de Frise, that he will not make the least motion with his army, but as we shall concert.[1]

To Wratislaw he said:

> The army on the Upper Rhine must be strengthened, and either the Margrave or Prince Eugene must take the command there. *A General of great experience and vigilance* is necessary, because undoubtedly, whilst we shall be weaker there, the enemy will be stronger, against which we have the advantage of the Rhine. I should be very glad if the Margrave, being the most experienced, took command there.[2]

We may note the diplomatic touch about the need of having the most experienced general on the Rhine.

On June 8, while the Marshals at Zweibrücken were inditing their four alternative staff papers to Louis XIV, Wratislaw reached the Margrave's headquarters at Aermingen. Prince Eugene had already arrived, but the conversation was begun between Wratislaw and the Margrave alone. The Margrave agreed at once that the army on the Upper Rhine must be strengthened. On the question of who should go there he remarked casually but decisively, "You will have great difficulty in persuading the Prince of Savoy to take the command." At this moment Eugene entered the room: Wratislaw began his story over again. Marlborough, he said, considered that the army on the Upper Rhine must forthwith be reinforced. Either the Margrave or Prince Eugene must take command of it. Here the Margrave broke in, "Try to persuade the Prince to do so. For in the army he is the only man who could be entrusted with a command so responsible *and subject to so many risks.*" The reference to the "many risks" was shrewdly calculated. Eugene's temperament and sense of military honour were evidently well known to the Margrave. He knew he was leaving no choice open. Eugene answered as a soldier: "The Emperor has sent me into the Empire to serve under the command of his Lieutenant-General, and as I have never made difficulties about going wherever duty called me, I am quite ready to carry out the order of the Lieutenant-General. But I must remind you that, as our weakness and the enemy's strength there are quite well known, I must have left with me sufficient troops to put me in a position *to attack* the enemy."

The Emperor had had heart-searchings about Prince Eugene. He had determined to leave the decision to that Prince, who, indeed, had been accorded latent powers superior to the Margrave. But as

[1] Coxe, i, 356.
[2] Wratislaw's dispatch, June 13.

the Emperor pondered over Eugene's character, which he knew so well, he feared that if a choice rested with Eugene, he would certainly choose for himself the most dangerous station. The Emperor could not bear the thought of this. In a rescript to Wratislaw he wrote:

> Subsequently I have come to the conclusion that the matter might be very harmful to my service. For the loyalty, zeal, and great valour of the Prince would at all times cause him to go wherever the danger was greatest. But that I cannot possibly allow. I will not permit the risking of the life of such a man, who is so competent and for so many reasons merits so well the respect and regard of myself and all my hereditary house.[1]

Therefore Eugene was not to decide for himself where he would fight, but only the generals together. However, the question had been settled by the Margrave's pointed remarks. And there are no grounds for thinking, as most English writers, following Coxe, suggest, that it was ever reopened. Marlborough, who learned of it the next day, announced it accordingly to the Duke of Würtemberg, the Prince of Hesse, and General Scholten by letters written from his camp at Mundelsheim on the morning of the 10th before he met Prince Eugene. There can be no argument about this.

Marlborough to the Prince of Hesse

MUNDELSHEIM
June 10

> An adjutant has just come from Prince Eugene, whom I expect every minute; it is now five P.M. and he has notified me that he will come to dinner here. *He is going to command on the Rhine*, where his presence is indeed necessary. . . .[2]

The Margrave, having secured his main point, made no difficulty about distributing the forces. He transferred to Prince Eugene all the Würtemberg troops in Dutch pay and offered the whole of the Prussian corps of eleven battalions and twenty squadrons, if they were found willing to go. What followed shows the curious conditions of these times. The Margrave sent for the Prussian Commander, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, and tendered him the choice of serving with the main army or with Eugene. If he opted for the main army, he was warned that he might be sent into districts where it would be impossible for the Margrave to guarantee his troops a daily bread-ration. Anhalt-Dessau put this issue bluntly—"Starve

[1] June 20. *Feldzüge*, vi, 739.
[2] *Dispatches*, p. 303.

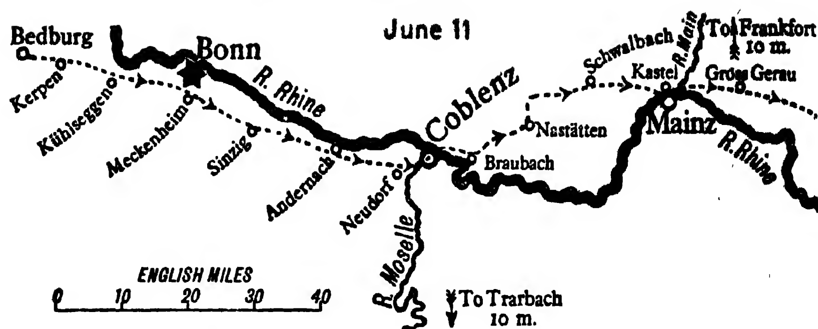
or obey"—to his generals. They decided to go to the Rhine. The fortresses and garrisons in the Black Forest—Freiburg, Villingen, Rothweil, and some smaller places—also passed to Eugene.

The command and the partition of the forces being thus determined, the Margrave opened a third topic. He mentioned that he had received approaches from the Elector. This roused the suspicions of Wratislaw and Eugene. So he had been in personal touch with Max Emmanuel during all the abortive operations which had enabled the French and Bavarians to combine their armies. The Margrave explained the nature of the Elector's proposals: how he "wanted to play Ulm into the hands of the Empire," to join the allies with sixteen thousand men and "treat the French if they would not agree in such a way that they would never forget it," always provided that the conditions offered to him were "sufficiently good."[1]

The Margrave said that the negotiations would first of all be concerned with a personal meeting between him and the Elector; and the Elector had said he would welcome at this meeting the presence of Prince Eugene. What did his two colleagues think of this? Both of them were stiffly reserved and adverse. If the Elector wanted a settlement let him first of all make a definite offer. Whatever he said, he could not be trusted. Obviously it was to his interest to gain time by any means. The Margrave did not challenge this view. He allowed the matter to drop. But when Eugene and Wratislaw pressed him to come with them at once to Marlborough's headquarters he demurred on the pretext of posting the army better, "which may well mean in fact," wrote Wratislaw to the Emperor, "in order to communicate further with the Elector. . . . Although we cannot advance anything definite, we are of opinion that the Margrave is unwilling to attack the Elector vigorously or to do him injury."[2]

In the evening of Tuesday, June 10, Eugene with Wratislaw reached Marlborough's camp. The Duke received his illustrious comrade with the highest military honours, and after a banquet described as "magnificent" the two generals spent several hours in each other's company. Then at once began that glorious brotherhood in arms which neither victory nor misfortune could disturb, before which jealousy and misunderstanding were powerless, and of which the history of war furnishes no equal example. The two

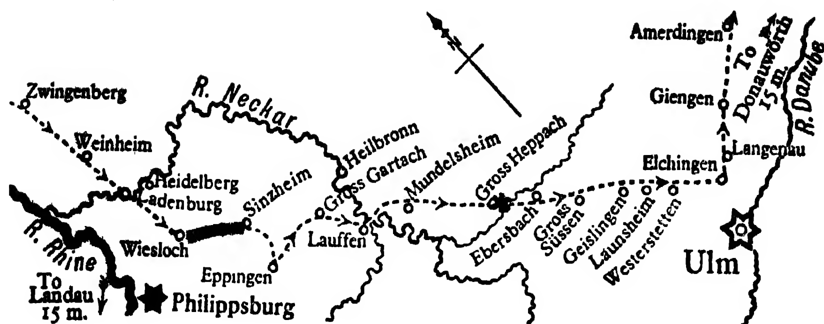
[1] Wratislaw's dispatch to the Emperor, June 14, 1704; *Feldzüge*, vi, 825.
[2] Wratislaw's dispatch; *ibid.*, 826.



men took to one another from the outset. They both thought and spoke about war in the same way, measured the vast forces at work by the same standards, and above all alike looked to a great battle with its awful risks as the means by which their problems would be solved.

Both, moreover, possessed the highest outlook on the war; for Eugene, though in the field, was still head of the Imperial War Council, and Marlborough was not only Commander-in-Chief of the English and Dutch armies, but very largely a Prime Minister as well. They could therefore feel towards the whole problem a responsibility different from that of the leaders of individual armies, however large. It must have been very refreshing to Eugene after his toilsome discussions at Vienna and with the Margrave, and to Marlborough after the long, paralysing obstructiveness of the Dutch, to find themselves in such perfect harmony upon the essentials of their task. Each felt the relief which comes from the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. In the midst of the intrigues, cross-purposes, and half-measures of a vast, unwieldy coalition trying to make war, here was the spirit of concord, design, and action.

Strangely different were they in appearance and manner; the Englishman with his noble, symmetrical features and pink-and-white complexion, with his languid courtier air and quizzical smile, and with that sense of calm and power which was his aura: the French-Austrian-Italian death's head, vibrant with energy, olive-dark, fiery like a banked furnace; Marlborough bland, grave, affable, cool: Eugene ardent, staccato, theatrical, heroic. Nor was the contrast of their lives less marked. Marlborough, the model husband and father, concerned with building up a home, founding a family, and gathering a fortune to sustain it: Eugene, a bachelor—nay, almost a misogynist—disdainful of money, content with his bright



sword and his lifelong animosities against Louis XIV. Certainly quite different kinds of men; yet when their eyes met each recognised a kindred spirit in all that governs war. They were in action, as has been well said, "two bodies with one soul."

Next day, the 11th, Marlborough's march was to Heppach, and Eugene rode with him. In the meadows between the road and the river the whole of the English cavalry, nineteen squadrons, were found drawn up for Eugene to ride along their ranks. They were indeed a spectacle to greet a military eye. Everything was in excellent order—men, horses, equipment, and uniforms in perfect condition, a little travel-stained, rather fine-drawn, but all that soldiers should be. "My Lord," said Eugene, "I never saw better horses, better clothes, finer belts and accoutrements; but money, which you don't want in England, will buy clothes and fine horses, but it can't buy that lively air I see in every one of these troopers' faces." "Sir," said Marlborough "that must be attributed to their heartiness for the public cause and the particular pleasure and satisfaction they have in seeing your Highness."[1]

These compliments, which were intended for the public, are all that has come down to us of Marlborough's prolonged conversations with Eugene on this their first meeting. But it is clear that they came to much closer grips behind the scenes. The two men were together from Tuesday till Friday, and the more they talked over what they had to do the better they understood and liked one another. "Prince Eugene," wrote Marlborough to Sarah, ". . . has in his conversation a great deal of my lord Shrewsbury, with the advantage of seeming franker. He has been very free with me, in giving me the character of the Prince of Baden, by which I find I

[1] Hare's Journal.

must be much more on my guard than if I was to act with Prince Eugene. . . ."[1] We know how much Marlborough was attracted by Shrewsbury, and the charm exerted by "the King of Hearts," as he was always called. Nothing could be more expressive to Sarah of Marlborough's esteem for Prince Eugene than his use of this comparison. The fullest confidences were interchanged between the two chiefs. Here and now they resolved one way or another to bring matters to a supreme trial with the French before the campaign ended, and, although they must at first be separated for a time, to combine for that purpose. This desultory but costly and possibly fatal warfare of sieges and manœuvres of nicely balanced forces, advancing and retiring according to the rules of war, exercising strategic influences upon each other with many bows and scrapes at the public expense, could only lead to destruction. It must be made to give place to a bloody punch and death-grip; and on this they would stake their lives and honour, and the lives of all the soldiers they could command. Surveying the general war, we can see that matters had now come to such a pitch that, without a great victory in two or three months, the Grand Alliance was doomed. Something had to be produced outstanding, and beyond the ordinary course of events, which would transform the scene. Safety and self-preservation demanded the stake of all for all. On that day they must be together.

Nothing could exceed the candour with which the character and qualities of the Margrave were canvassed. Marlborough expressed complete distrust of him and of his military abilities. Eugene revealed that if the Margrave did not do his duty "the Emperor was determined to stamp out the mischief with the utmost vigour." They did not by any means, however, exclude the possibility of negotiating with the Elector. Marlborough dwelt on the dangers of conducting a negotiation through the King of Prussia. They all agreed that Wratislaw should obtain authority from the Emperor to treat with him, if needful, on the spot. Marlborough wrote forthwith for such powers from London; but he was already in all but form a plenipotentiary for England.

Marlborough to Godolphin

GREAT HEPPACH
June 11, 1704

*Yesterday the Prince Eugene came to me. *He is to command on the Rhine,* where he will have all the Prussians, the Palatines, and other

[1] Coxe, i, 341.

troops that are to make a body of 30,000 men. But I am very much afraid the French will force their passage before the Prussians can arrive, for they begin their march but this day from the Danube. They must have ten days for their march, and those troops of the circle of Swabia which are on the Rhine must have a long time to go to the Danube. I could not forbear telling P. Eugene that if we should have made such counter-marches in Flanders when the enemy are ready to put their projects in execution, we should have been very much censured. He agreed that it would have been a much better time if this had been done immediately after the reinforcement had joined the Elector of Bavaria; but the truth is that *P. Louis had no thoughts but that of having a strong army,* I hope with the design of having it in his power to beat the Elector. . . . P. Eugene marched with me this day, Prince Louis having sent me word that he will be with me to-morrow [actually the day after], so that when we have agreed upon the method, we shall open the campaign. *P. Eugene will take post for the Rhine.* . . . I find by P. Eugene that everything here is in a worse condition than I could have imagined, although I thought them very bad.

It may so fall out that the service may suffer, by my not having the powers of treating.

On this day also he wrote to Harley congratulating him on becoming Secretary of State.

Meanwhile the Margrave was approaching. He was, as arranged, reinforcing the Rhine front at Stollhofen from his army opposite the Elector, with 9 squadrons and 15 battalions, perhaps twelve thousand men. On the morning of the 13th he was a day's journey from Heppach. No pains were spared to gain his good-will. Cadogan with a gallant escort went to meet him on the road, and Marlborough, Eugene at his side, received him with the utmost ceremonial. Again compliments were exchanged for the benefit of the armies. Prince Louis spoke with soldierly frankness. "Your Grace is come to save the Empire and give me an opportunity to vindicate my honour, which I am sensible is in some manner at the last stake in the opinion of some people." This reference to the muddled operations in the Black Forest and at the Pass of Stockach might well have disarmed the fierce professional criticism by which the Margrave was assailed. Marlborough said in reply, "I come to learn from your Highness how to do the Empire service; for men must want judgment who do not know that the Prince of Baden has not only, when his health would permit him, preserved the Empire, but extended its conquests as well as secured its own [territory]."[1]

[1] Lediard, i, 308.

The three generals met before the Lamb Inn at Gross Heppach under a great tree still distinguishable in the nineteenth century. Marlborough was the eldest: he was fifty-four. Prince Louis was fifty, and Eugene not yet forty-one. In military rank the Margrave stood first, next Marlborough, and then Eugene. Marlborough was the only one who was not a royalty. He was the only one who had never gained a battle. He could not compare in military renown with Prince Louis, still less with the famous Eugene. Still, there he was, the Englishman, with his commanding personality, his redcoats, and the army he had led so far to aid the Empire. Thus he counted for something. Indeed, he became naturally and at once the presiding authority: and this was virtually implied in the conditions he had exacted before he committed himself to the adventure.

Later they came to business. The Margrave had long had his plan prepared against Bavaria. It was the one which Legalle had already explained to King Louis. It required two armies, together overwhelming, each strong enough to defend itself. With one army he would cross the Danube above Ulm, then pass the Iller by its numerous fords, and engage the Elector from the south, while the other army broke into Bavaria across the Danube somewhere from the north. Marlborough agreed with this now conventional pincer operation. He agreed also that the Margrave should be the southern and he the northern claw. But the Duke of Würtemberg had not made the Danish cavalry march as fast as was expected. They were still nearly a fortnight behind, and until they arrived there were not enough troops to form two adequate armies. They must act at first as one, for, considering the pressure they must expect upon the Rhine, there was not a day to be lost. The merging of the armies raised directly the question of the command.

This problem was serious and delicate. By custom the Margrave, the Lieutenant-General of the Emperor and first general of the Empire, would, especially on the soil of Germany, have had precedence. But Marlborough had not come all the way from the North Sea with what was probably the best disciplined and equipped army in the world in order to renew under Louis of Baden the vexations he had suffered from the Dutch Deputies. He had therefore before he started obtained conditions which, although by no means ideal, were not so unsatisfactory or absurd as has been represented by so many writers. On April 4 the Supreme Council of War at Vienna had considered the proposals of the Margrave, who

was

content to divide the command with the Duke of Marlborough and arrange matters on the same footing as they were with the Elector of Bavaria and the Duke of Lorraine in Hungary and the Reich, . . . and in the event of his being attacked by the enemy the Duke of Marlborough could join the Lieutenant-General's army and share the command with him. And so that that should be no stumbling-block on the question of the parola [the watchword of the day] . . . your Imperial Majesty could send the parola to the two commanding generals and it could then either be given by each to his army or to his wing if the armies were together or alternatively could be given out by each of them on alternate days.[1]

We see therefore that there was never any question either of Marlborough or his army coming under the Margrave's orders or of the two commanders taking it in daily turn to command the combined forces. The two generals had to work together as commanders of independent forces of equal status; and they agreed at Gross Heppach that the orders of the day which had been settled beforehand and the parola should be issued in turn from the tent of each of them. Furthermore, while the titular honours and appearance of the command were thus equally shared, there was a definite understanding and assurance that the prevailing direction of the campaign lay with Marlborough, who had the largest army and had come at great personal risk to rescue the Empire.

On the 15th, when the conferences had ended, he wrote:

But at the same time they [Eugene and Wratislaw] have assured me that their master would not suffer him to do hurt, either by his temper, or by want of good inclinations. After I have said this, I must do him the justice, that I think he will do well; *for* [and this is a striking phrase] *he must be a devil, after what he has said, if he does otherwise.*[2]

It was agreed at Gross Heppach that the Margrave, with his army north of Ulm, should hold the Elector; that Eugene, with less than thirty thousand men, should at Philippsburg or Stollhofen confront the Marshals, who were found to have sixty thousand on the Upper Rhine, and that Marlborough should traverse the mountains with his whole force, and join the Margrave as quickly as possible. Eugene was deeply conscious of the weight he had to bear. "I realize very clearly," he wrote on June 14 to Starhemberg,

that I am placing myself in a serious *impegno* . . . yet I have not in the present circumstances been able to decline this dangerous command."[3]

[1] The Archduke Joseph's report to the Emperor, April 12, 1704; *Feldzüge*, vi, 728.
[2] Coxe, i, 343.
[3] *Feldzüge*, vi, Suppt., p. 55.

And so, in Marlborough's words to Godolphin, "After we had taken the necessary resolutions for putting in execution what had been projected against the Elector of Bavaria, yesterday in the afternoon Prince Eugene went for the Rhine, Prince Louis to his army, and your humble servant to his place."[1]

Meanwhile Marlborough's march had produced its reactions both in Holland and England. The States-General had, it is true, promptly acceded to his request to allow their troops and reinforcements to go to the Danube. But they naturally felt entitled to throw the whole responsibility for what might happen upon the commander. By concealment and stratagem he had forced their hand. He had created a position in which they had no choice but to wreck the campaign or support him against their wishes and judgment in an obviously most disputable adventure. Heinsius had been glad to see the decision ultimately carried in Marlborough's favour, but undercurrents of resentment and alarm ran through the whole Dutch oligarchy and its military advisers. "On his head be it," was the general view.

In England these feelings were even more intense. The Tories were outraged in their party principles by this carrying of the war and of the Queen's troops into the heart of the Continent. Such measures were contrary to their whole theory of British policy. No authority had been given by Parliament for any such surprising transference of the army to a new and remote theatre. The influential ex-Ministers threatened fury and retribution upon the Captain-General, who had broken loose not only from prudent methods of warfare, but from proper Parliamentary control. These reproaches were not confined to violent partisans. A letter in the French archives says:

> The moderate party has decided to frame articles accusing Marlborough of having arbitrarily [*de sa propre tete*] changed the seat and measures of the war: of having withdrawn [*avoir eloingne*] forces capable of defending the country at a perilous moment: of having thrown doubts upon the fidelity of Prince Louis of Baden [*entre dans une mefiance de la fidelite du Pe. Louis de Bade*].[2]

No doubt there was some exaggeration in this, but Seymour pithily expressed the views of the hunting squires. "If he fails we will break him up as hounds upon a hare."

And fail he surely would in this mad escapade. It was lucky indeed that Parliament, with its Tory majority in the Commons

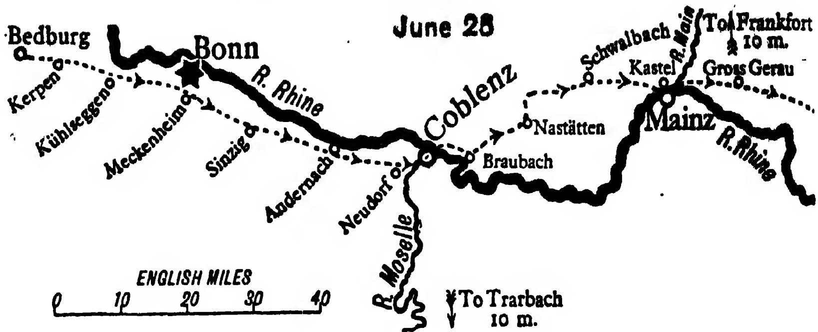
[1] Coxe, i, 343. [2] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 214, f. 113 *et seq.*

and hostile Whigs, was not in session. The chiefs of the Opposition consoled themselves meanwhile with the belief, or even secret, subconscious hope, that a disaster was impending. It was worth while to wait for the supreme opportunity which would probably come their way. They could not bring Marlborough back now before some awful trial of strength occurred. An overwhelming case would come into their hands when the famous, invincible armies of France, baffled, defeated, or destroyed the presumptuous general and lukewarm Tory. This arch-dissembler had brought the Occasional Conformity Bill to nothing. He had struck a covert blow at the Church of England in her stress and tribulation. He had used his favour, and his wife's favour—that poisonous Whig—to pervert their own Tory Queen. All the true leaders of Toryism had been driven from her councils at his instigation. A wretched set of moderates and trimmers of both parties clustered around Godolphin and Harley. They might be strong enough to maintain themselves in office until this hideous gamble with the Queen's armies in a far-off European quarrel had met its fate. But thereafter vengeance would be wreaked upon the whole gang of hardy intriguers. A day would come, and soon, when this reckoning could be made.

Neither were the Whigs, as we have seen, content or loyal. True, they did not approve of Continental warfare, and they had some representation in the Government: but what folly it was, at a time when all Toryism was rabid, not to rely upon the great party which had sustained King William and saved the cause of civil and religious liberty! Moreover, it was their own cause that was at stake. They it was who would suffer as a party by a disaster in the field. If Marlborough failed a Tory triumph was inevitable, and meanwhile the Whigs had scarcely any share of the offices. A colourless central combination built around the placemen of the Crown and favourites of the Court was a precarious foundation for policies the audacity of which might well break the strongest Government. And why, inquired the Whigs, was this course adopted? Why were they not fully trusted? Clearly because Marlborough and Godolphin were at their old tricks again with the Jacobite exiles.

Lediard prints some instructive letters from Cardonnel's widely gathered correspondence.[1] Lord Stamford, for instance, wrote on June 2:

[1] Lediard, i, 318–320.



. . . I can assure you, it has been a very great mortification to the Party to be so crossed and exposed, when nothing could stand against them in the House of Commons. . . .

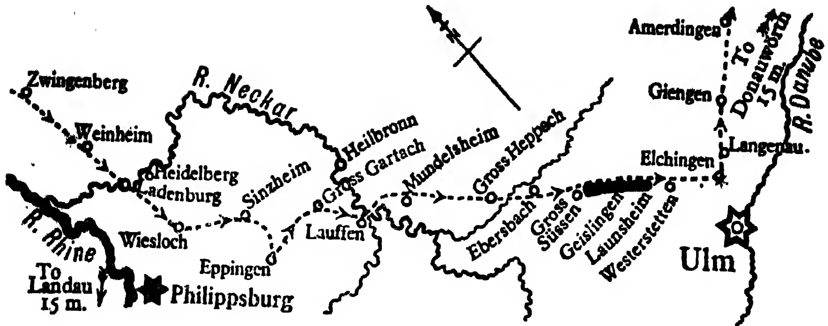
. . . I must own your reasonings upon the changes at court [*i.e.*, the dismissal of the High Tories] to be the same with our most judicious, honest men here, that is, to be very chimerical, and will not, in all human probability, attain the ends aimed at, but may have a contrary effect; Whatever My Lord Marlborough does abroad (which for the sake of Europe, I heartily wish may be well) Yet his foundation being rotten here, and his not increasing his friends, may exasperate his enemies to that height, that it may push them on beyond the rules and measures, which have been kept amongst them hitherto.

This refers to the general understanding of both parties, apart from their views, to support the war and vote supplies. Stamford continued:

You know when two sets of people agree in a third design, tho' they personally hate one another, and have still concurred in the main, to prevent a third [*i.e.*, the enemy] reaping any benefit; yet such things may be done, that may occasion an entire breach, that so those rules may be no more thought of. This I look upon to be our case.

A letter written by an English gentleman at the Court of Hanover to a compatriot in another German Court also came into Cardonnel's hands.

I am sure, that there is a greater party forming against My Lord Treasurer and My Lord Marlborough, than ever there was against King William's Ministers, and what the consequence may be, I cannot tell. Affairs will yet go worse, if their Enemies prevail; but much will depend upon My Lord's success in Germany, and no King could wish for a more noble opportunity to relieve not only Germany, but



Europe, than this that he is employed upon, or that could be more glorious for himself. If the Elector of Bavaria is reduced, it will stop the mouths of his enemies, and they will not be able to hurt him in England; But if he fails, he will be railed at in Holland, and accused in England, for the loss he must suffer in such an expedition, and I much apprehend the consequence everywhere.

And, again (June 25):

> My Lord Marlborough has joined the troops under Prince Lewis of Baden, not far from Ulm, and the success of this affair will either gain him a great reputation, and very much shelter him from his enemies (which are not few) or be his ruin.

These tidings and doubtless many others came daily to Marlborough's headquarters as they rolled forward, march by march, and formed a background to his thoughts while he pondered upon the impugned loyalty of the Margrave, strove to conciliate and work him, and measured from hour to hour the anxious, obscure strategic scene.

The first step was to join the two armies. Marlborough had still to traverse the hilly country of the Swabian Jura before he could enter the Danube basin. This required enormous exertions from Churchill's foot and artillery. The defile of Geislingen, through which he must pass, was narrow, and even in good weather extremely difficult for wagons. Of course it poured with rain for ten days. Men and horses floundered and struggled forward. Meanwhile the Margrave's army was well placed to cover the exits from the mountainous regions on the Danube plain. But the Margrave was greatly weakened by the departure of the troops he had sent to Eugene for the Rhine. There was always the danger that the Elector

and Marsin would attack him before Marlborough could get clear of the hills and join him in the plains. While this task was at its worst the States-Generals were led to believe that Villeroy was returning to the Netherlands, and demanded a part at least of their force for the defence of Holland. They did not get them.

Because we have turned aside to discuss strategy and politics, the reader must not lose the sensation of a continuous march. Marlborough could ride on ahead and have two or three days to transact his affairs. But the scarlet caterpillar crawled onward ceaselessly. It averaged about ten miles a day for six weeks. Napoleon's march a century later from Boulogne to Ulm over much better roads was considerably faster. But Marlborough's aim was not entirely speed. The Danes anyhow were lagging behind him. Everything depended upon the timing of passing successive critical points in relation to the knowledge and movements of the enemy, and on the fitness and spirit of his troops at the end of their march. All his strategic requirements were satisfied by the pace they made. To Versailles and to the French Marshals, as from time to time they received their news, it seemed that Marlborough was marching with "great strides" to the Danube, and that nothing could intercept or overtake him.

Chapter Seventeen

THE STORM OF THE SCHELLENBERG

1704—JULY 2

THE junction of the two armies was effected on the 22nd at Launsheim, and their full concentration was complete by the end of June. It was the largest and strongest force of cavalry and infantry yet massed in Europe in all these wars. After providing the army for the Rhine the line of battle was formed of 177 squadrons and 76 battalions. Its weakness was in artillery. Marlborough had only been able to bring field-pieces with him in his six weeks of marching, and the Imperialists were woefully deficient even in the lighter guns. Together they could muster but forty-eight cannon. However, three-quarters belonged to the English Artillery, which, under Colonel Blood, was of exceptional quality and mobility. Siege train as yet there was none, and only twenty-four pontoons were available for throwing bridges.

Ever darker became the suspicions which Marlborough and Wratislaw entertained against the Margrave. General Goor, who was at this time entirely in Marlborough's confidence and who acted in many ways as his staff officer, a second Cadogan, inflamed these suspicions with all the knowledge he had gathered about the Margrave from the year he had served under him. Everything that the Margrave suggested, whether on military manœuvres or in the negotiations which he still continued with the Elector, was scrutinized and discussed between these three. It had been agreed to march to Giengen on the 25th and court a battle. This would bring the hostile armies face to face. But at midnight on the 24th the Margrave sent Baron Forster to Marlborough asking him whether he would not make the 25th a day of rest, for he, the Margrave, had a plan for forcing the Elector to fight at a disadvantage. Marlborough assented to the day of rest, and the army did not march. In the morning Wratislaw was charged by the Margrave to explain his scheme to Marlborough. "When I proposed these details to my lord . . ." reported the envoy, "he was quite amazed by them and said to me, 'Is this really the best plan the Margrave has been able to think of

to make the Elector fight?'"[1] He proceeded to riddle it with criticism. The Margrave himself evidently had no confidence in his proposal, for when he came to Marlborough's headquarters in the afternoon he did not advance it. On the contrary, he spoke only of his wish to separate the armies and proceed himself to the Upper Iller. Marlborough replied that it would not be safe to divide the armies till the Danish cavalry had arrived, which could scarcely be before July 5 or 6. Accordingly it was once more decided to march upon Giengen and the enemy. Wratislaw says:

> The same evening Marlborough asked that General Goor whom he [the Margrave] had put under arrest a year before, should be brought to him, and this was at once done. This Goor revealed to us that the Lieutenant-General had first protested to him profusely that he wished to maintain his friendship with Marlborough, but after this had attempted to prevent the march to Giengen.

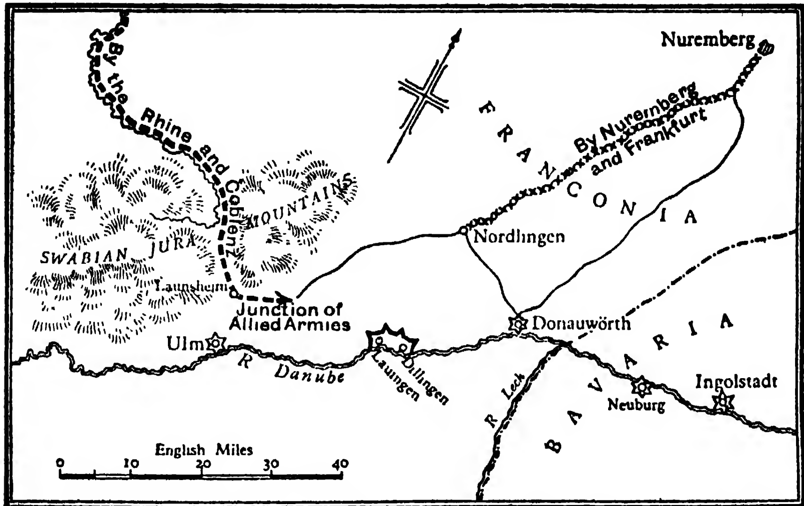
The suggestion was evidently present to both Marlborough and Wratislaw that the Margrave had wished by losing a day to make sure that the Elector got safely within his lines of Lauingen. This view was strengthened when the march began on the early morning of the 26th, and it was seen that the Elector was already retiring in haste, but in time.

No sooner on the 26th had the Elector made good his retreat to his line and the allied army encamped than the Margrave sent the Comte de Frise to Marlborough with a new project. The army should be divided; Marlborough, with 40 battalions and 65 squadrons, would watch the Elector in his entrenchments, while the Margrave, marching down the Danube, would force a passage near Neuburg. By this arrangement the army would be divided into two halves, and Marlborough would give up 9 battalions and 20 squadrons of the troops in Anglo-Dutch pay to his colleague. This did not commend itself to him. He replied that to separate now, when within a few days he was to receive the Danish, and the Margrave the Swabian, reinforcements, "would be indefensible should the slightest misfortune arise out of it."

The Captain-General had, in fact, other cares and other designs. Although in superior strength to the enemy, he sat with only passes through the mountainous, unfertile country behind him. But the long, delicate flank march was now over, and he was independent of the middle Rhine, with its many points of weakness.

[1] Wratislaw to the Emperor, Giengen, June 29; *Feldzüge*, vi, 830.

To subsist and be secure he must at once move east and pick up his new line of communications with Franconia. All this had been duly prepared. Under cover of the Margrave's army at Ulm he had been for some weeks past forming large magazines and hospitals at Nördlingen, whence his line of supply stretched back to Nuremberg and its fertile regions. His financial base at Frankfort was already



THE NEW COMMUNICATIONS

linked up with the new area, and his agents and contractors were actively purchasing supplies and hiring transport throughout the whole valley of the Pegnitz. It was necessary to draw the allied army from the broken, barren foothills of the Swabian Jura and place it at the head of these far safer communications. It was, moreover, urgent to force the Danube and seize a fortified bridgehead upon it. There was only one place which suited both these requirements. Curiously enough, Villars, as history has revealed, had given a prescient warning to the Elector in the previous year: "Fortify your towns, and above all the Schellenberg, that fort above Donauwörth, the importance of which the great Gustavus taught us."[1] The warning had passed unheeded, and now it was upon this same fort that Marlborough's eye had for some time been fixed. On June 8, two days before he had met Eugene and four days before Prince Louis had arrived, he had written to Godolphin, "I shall in two days after the junction [of Marlborough's and the

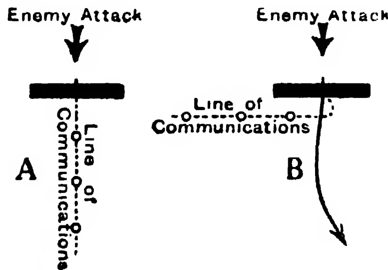
[1] L. P Anquetil, *Vie du Maréchal Duc de Villars* (1784), i, 289.

Margrave's armies] march directly to Donauwörth. If I can take that place, I shall there settle a magazine for the army."

The capture of Donauwörth would give crossings for both the Danube and the Lech and direct entry into Bavaria. Its fortified possession would enable Marlborough to bestride the Danube and manœuvre on either bank as events might require. From Donauwörth his new line of communications, and if necessary of retreat, would run back naturally into Franconia almost at right angles to his front.[1]

The Duke was therefore only awaiting the arrival of his infantry to do what he had for some time intended. He now replied to the Comte de Frise that "he would ask the Margrave to make him a present of Donauwörth, and until this had been done not to think of a separation or of any other design." He added that "he must confess to the Margrave that his troops had this failing, that they could not remain in the field without bread. It was therefore necessary to capture some place where magazines could be formed." The discussion was continued on the 27th. The Margrave remarked that he had information that the enemy intended to fortify the position on the heights of Donauwörth, and to this end had already collected a great many peasants from the district. Now Donauwörth had assuredly been mentioned in the conference of the three generals at Gross Heppach, and it seemed odd to both Marlborough and Wratislaw that the Elector should have gained such timely intelligence. He replied sternly that the Schellenberg must be stormed even if it cost ten or twelve thousand men. Here was a clash of wills.

[1] An army thus placed is able to withdraw directly upon its communications, finding depots and meeting reinforcements and food convoys at every stage (A).



An army whose communications are in prolongation of its front is said to be 'formed to a flank.' This is a dangerous and unsound strategic position. If driven back only a few miles this army is cut from its supplies and base, and in the greatest danger of entire destruction (B).

There was therefore not only the sharpest difference of opinion between the two commanders, but Marlborough and Wratislaw had the deepest misgivings about the Margrave's good faith. "I am doing all that is humanly possible," wrote Wratislaw,

> to quench this fire, and I am certain that Marlborough will never break out publicly against the Margrave, but will, on the contrary, caress him on every possible occasion. It is not however altogether possible to calm his suspicions, because I am myself beginning to have doubts as to the Lieutenant-General's conduct, for it is certain that without me the artillery from Philippsburg and the Rhine would not be on its way, *and what could we do with great armies if we had not artillery with which to make a hole through the wall?* Marlborough said to me that in a few days it would be possible to come to a definite conclusion on the conduct of the Margrave, and if his conduct is not correct, two alternatives are open: either to arrest him or to send him to the Rhine at your Imperial Majesty's express command and to bring the Prince of Savoy here. The first is safer, but not perhaps quite fair; for we have nothing positive to bring forward against the Margrave, and never shall have, because he is too clever and wily to allow himself to be caught in the act.

He then proposed to the Emperor to strip the Margrave of his two most trusted officers, Baron Forster and the Comte de Frise. The one was to be sent to Vienna and kept there, "*once you have got him*," during the whole campaign. The other was to be sent to the Rhine. He concluded this remarkable dispatch with the following words:

> It is unnecessary to impress upon your Imperial Majesty the secrecy of this letter; for you will yourself recognize . . . if the slightest thing leaked out, a faithful servant would probably lose his life—or at least my person would be exposed to the implacable revenge of the Margrave. . . . My fidelity compels me to say to your Imperial Majesty that at the moment the stake at issue is not the Spanish monarchy, but the very preservation of your Imperial Majesty's sacred person and your whole Imperial house.[1]

Nothing could show more vividly than these words the grim and even terrible relations which festered in the allied headquarters.

Amid these various tensions Marlborough remained serene, calm, patient, efficient, and good-humoured as ever. His repose and conviction were imperturbable. His letters to Sarah show his care of his troops, his poise, and his resolve.

[1] Giengen, June 29, 1704; *Feldzüge*, vi, 832 *et seq.*

June 25

As I was never more sensible of heat in my life than I was a fortnight ago, we have now the other extremity of cold; for as I am writing I am forced to have fire in the stove in my chamber. But the poor men, that have not such conveniences, I am afraid will suffer from these continual rains. As they do us hurt here, they do good to prince Eugene on the Rhine, so that we must take the bad with the good.[1]

And:

GIENGEN
June 29

Since my last, I have had the happiness of receiving yours of the 30th of the last month, and the 1st and 2nd of this. It is not only by yours, but by others that I find that there are several people, who would be glad of my not having success in this undertaking. I am very confident, without flattering myself, that it is the only thing that was capable of saving us from ruin, so that whatever the success may be, I shall have the inward satisfaction to know that I have done all that was in my power, and that none can be angry with me for the undertaking, but such as wish ill to their country and their religion, and with such I am not desirous of their friendship.

The English foot and cannon joined me two days ago, but I do not expect the Danish horse till six or seven days hence, till which time, we shall not be able to act against the Elector of Bavaria, as I could wish. You will easily believe that I act with all my heart and soul, since good success will in all likelihood give me the happiness of ending my days with you. The Queen's allowing you to say something from her is very obliging. I shall endeavour to deserve it; for I serve her with all my heart, and I am very confident she will always have the prayers and good wishes of this country.

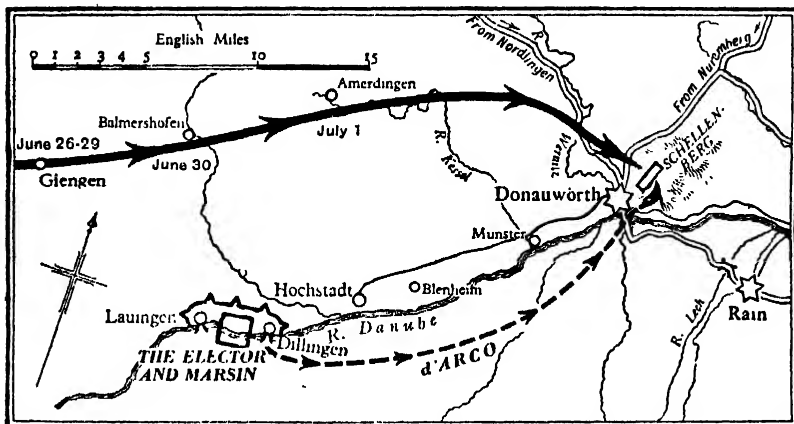
He adds, with that peculiar power of being interested in all sorts of things great and small at the same time which was a characteristic both of Frederick the Great and Napoleon:

You have forgot to order Hodges to send me a draught of a stable, as I directed him, for the lodge; for it ought not to be made use of till the year after it is built; and as I see you set your heart on that place, I should be glad all conveniences were about it.[2]

Meanwhile the allied army waited at Giengen, opposite the entrenched camp and at an equal distance from Ulm and Donauwörth. Thus the enemy was still left in doubt where they meant to strike. After the argument of the 27th the Margrave resisted no further, and resigned himself to an attack on Donauwörth with united

[1] Coxe, i, 346. [2] *Ibid.*, 347.

forces. Marlborough waited at Giengen till Churchill came in with all his infantry and cannon, and had a good day's rest. On June 30 the whole army was moved eastward downstream, parallel to the Danube, to Balmershofen, within four miles of the Lauingen-Dillingen lines. The march was resumed the next morning, Marlborough taking sixty squadrons as flank guard. Though the



THE ADVANCE TO THE SCHELLENBERG

cavalry rode as close as possible to the enemy's works, the defenders lay low, and not a shot was fired. The allies camped near Amerdingen, fifteen miles from Donauwörth. Marlborough sent out a reconnaissance of four hundred horse with officers of high rank to view the Schellenberg and learn what was happening there. With this went the quartermasters of the army with orders to choose a camp behind the Wernitz stream about four miles from Donauwörth, and also to report on the roads, bridges, and tracks. The officers reported strong enemy camps on the Schellenberg, and that the troops were working hard on their entrenchments. During the afternoon various peasants and deserters came to Marlborough's tent and were carefully examined.

The Elector had neglected the advice which Villars had given him, and it was not until the third week in June that he began any work upon the defences of the Schellenberg. The lines of defence to be constructed were more than two miles in extent, and it seems that the engineers began upon the extreme right flank by the Danube, which was then entirely open, and worked their way round towards the Old Fort and the fortress, finishing as they went

and leaving this sector till the last. The Elector had felt bound to delay the reinforcement of the garrison of Donauwörth until he could learn clearly the intention of his more numerous opponents. But as soon as he saw the continuous procession of the allied army across his front during the 30th he sent Comte d'Arco with fourteen thousand men to defend Donauwörth and complete the fortification of the Schellenberg. He had no reason to suppose that Donauwörth could be attacked before the morning of the 3rd. His enemies had still two fifteen-mile marches to make, and even their advance guard could hardly reach their objective before the evening of the 2nd. They would certainly not attack so late in the day and with wearied troops, and by the 3rd d'Arco should be strongly entrenched. In spite of having delayed so long to fortify the Schellenberg, the Elector had good reason to hope for success.

It has been erroneously supposed that Marlborough and the Margrave agreed to command the whole army on alternate days, whereas in fact, as we have explained, the alternation only affected the ceremonial and the watchword. Even about this there is a serious conflict of evidence upon the initial date. Wratislaw in his dispatch of June 23 says, "On the 22nd one troop found themselves actually entered into the Lieutenant-General's camp. . . . On that day, as the first of concentration, the Margrave issued the watchword." We have seen again how at midnight on the 24th the Margrave sent to ask Marlborough whether he would not make the 25th a day of rest, the inference being that the 25th was Marlborough's day. If this was true the odd-numbered days fell to Marlborough and the even to the Margrave. Thus the Margrave commanded on July 2 at the battle of the Schellenberg. The English authorities, on the other hand, are unanimous that the battle was fought on Marlborough's day. Dr Hare, whose account was "perused by Marlborough" shortly after the action, says distinctly, "It being His Grace's turn to command the next day, he resolved to attack."[1] General Kane and Captain Parker confirm him. The conflict of testimony is direct. The evidence of events favours the view that July 2 was the Margrave's day, and that he issued the parola immediately after midnight on the 1st.

The point, however, is not one of substance. There is no foundation for all the well-known arguments that Marlborough felt bound to attack on the 2nd as he could not trust the Margrave to attack on the morrow. This consideration did not influence the operations.

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 332.

Whatever the sequence, there is no doubt that Marlborough's will prevailed continuously throughout these days, and that, while taking pains to carry his co-general with him, he acted during them and afterwards reported upon the battle as if he were the sole Commander-in-Chief. It was, of course, inherent in their co-operation that the two commanders should seem to act together as one, and that no divergence or contradiction in policy should be apparent to the troops.

During the afternoon Marlborough issued orders which could only portend action the next day. One hundred and thirty men were to be drawn from every battalion of his own army to form a special force nearly six thousand strong of what would now be called 'storm troops.' Such a selection could not be made hurriedly, and must have been carried out in daylight before the troops lay down to sleep. Six o'clock was, in fact, the latest moment for such orders, as well as for many of the other necessary preparations. When darkness fell and while all this was going on, Marlborough visited the Margrave. There is no record of the details of their interview, but it is certain that he procured the agreement of his colleague, for we know that at 10 P.M. an officer was sent to Nördlingen with a letter from the Margrave to the local authorities to collect surgeons and prepare for the reception of a large number of wounded. Moreover, three battalions of Imperial Grenadiers were added by the Margrave to Marlborough's 'storm troops,' evidently to make it plain that the two commanders were united. The special force of infantry with 35 squadrons and strong parties of pioneers for road- and bridge-making were ordered to march at 3 A.M. under Marlborough's personal command. A forlorn hope of eighty volunteers led by Lord Mordaunt, Peterborough's son (one of the suitors of Lady Mary, and the 'Raskell' of her father's letter), was formed to head the assault. The rest of the army was to follow with the Margrave at daylight.

Every one learned from these orders the desperate character of the operation and the unusual measures which were to be adopted. It seemed to many a plan of hardihood. The army was still fifteen miles from Donauwörth. They had to cross the Wernitz stream in their march and deploy for battle at the end of it. They could not hope to come to grips before about six o'clock in the evening, and there would only be two hours' daylight left. There is no doubt that nearly all the generals on both sides, friend and foe, thought it inadmissible for the allies to fight a battle before the 3rd. But

enemy had not stopped at the marked-out camp. They had thrown several bridges and plankways across the Wernitz, and were moving steadily across these and the old stone bridge into the cup-like space beneath the Schellenberg. It was surely too late to make so grave an attack before sundown; but anyhow one must ride out and see. The horses were brought, and the Command clattered up the hill to their toiling troops. The scene was now much changed. The whole of the opposite slopes descending to the foot of the Schellenberg were crowded with brightly clothed regiments and brigades, horse, foot, and guns all moving forward as fast as they could and with an air of resolute aggression. Large numbers were already across the Wernitz, and long columns were streaking towards that very space between the wood and the fortress cannon which Marshal d'Arco and his assistants admitted was the most likely point of assault.

There are few surer tests of the virtue of a military movement than the impression it produces upon the best mind in the other army. D'Arco did not say to himself, "They are foolish to attack so late—what could be better for us?" On the contrary, he showed a marked uneasiness; and this exposure arose from the fact that he was a better soldier than actor. Indeed, his plight was most disagreeable. He had a strong position and excellent troops, but his defences were not finished, and now in an hour or two fifty or sixty thousand men under famous generals were going to fall upon him, apparently without regard to the fatigue of their march or the price they would have to pay. The question had been whether they would pay the price. If they thought it worth while to do so, he would almost certainly be destroyed. If he and his fourteen thousand men were blotted out before dark, the Franco-Bavarian army would be hopelessly inferior to the invaders. The gateway into Bavaria would be open, and the vengeance of the allies would fall upon his country. It was noticed that, while other Bavarians mocked at the imprudence of the allies' proceedings, their ablest soldier was plunged in the deepest depression. His distress was not due to any want of courage. He was in fact weighing the unpleasant question whether he should, while time remained, retreat, preserve his corps, leave the fortress to its fate, and in a few days lay Bavaria open to the invader. He could not bring himself to this, though on general grounds there was much to be said for it. His force, probably too weak to withstand the masses which were advancing upon it, was nevertheless large enough to be a fearful loss to the Elector's army.

Meanwhile, time and space were playing their appointed parts. The fringe of Bavarian outposts and covering troops came hurrying back before the advancing tide. They set light before retiring to the village of Berg and other hamlets and dwellings spread in a half-circle beneath the Schellenberg. The smoke drifted across the landscape, and as it died down at five o'clock a battery of ten guns opened fire from below Berg upon the deadly passage near the wood. All work had been abandoned for an hour past, and the defenders had drawn themselves up in battle order behind their unfinished breastworks. The heavy blue and scarlet columns hugging the wood and just out of range of the fortress were already massed in a dip in the ground—easily recognizable to-day—only two hundred and fifty yards away. The tips of all their standards could be seen, suggesting the number of battalions crammed together in this small space. Behind them, subtending both the fortress and the intervening ground, were certainly more than forty thousand men moving forward, line behind line in battle array. They were willing to pay the price for what they meant to have. Well, let them pay it.

According to the Imperial report of the action:

> At the request of the Duke of Marlborough, the Imperial Lieutenant-General continued his march on the morning of the 2nd, but since the march was very long and the army being obliged to change formation frequently found it extremely arduous, camp was not pitched till four o'clock in the afternoon . . . an hour's march from Donauwörth, where it was found that the previous information was correct—namely, that the enemy with a part of his army had finished great and advantageous entrenchments on the Schellenberg above Donauwörth and had in fact encamped part of his troops within them, and had made the rest of his encampment alongside the river across the Danube.[1]

Marlborough had come on the scene about nine o'clock, and directed the advance of the army. He reserved the old bridge which still stood across the Wernitz for the march of the storm troops. He had three pontoon bridges thrown for the main army. He sent the bulk of the cavalry into the thickets to cut fascines with which the infantry could fill any ditch that the enemy might have had time to dig in front of the breastworks. The storm troops, delayed by the soft, miry track, did not cross the river till noon. He then rode out with the Margrave and the generals concerned in the attack, and, as was his custom, personally reconnoitred the whole of the enemy's position. Their escort having driven in the enemy's

[1] Imperial Official Report; *Feldzüge*, vi, 835.

outposts, they were able to examine the whole front minutely. So close did "the high generality"[1] press that the fortress guns and even the field batteries opened a lively cannonade upon them which was continued during the whole of their inspection. The Duke had hoped that he could pass some at least of his troops through the dense wood, and thus extend his attack beyond it. But what he saw of the wood at close quarters convinced him that this was not practicable. The fortress cannon-balls bounding along among the staff showed how narrow was the space upon which the first and main assault must be delivered. He also saw how densely the enemy were gathered upon this threatened point.

It was nearly four when the generals joined their troops and the enemy's guns became silent. The main body of the army was now about to pass the bridges, and the storm troops were approaching the foot of the Schellenberg. The formidable aspect of the position had become only the more apparent at close quarters, but when Marlborough looked across the Danube beyond Donauwörth he could see the considerable camp marked out for the enemy's reinforcements. The tents of the cavalry were already pitched on either flank, and between them a broad space was reserved for infantry who would certainly arrive during the night. To-day the price would be heavy. To-morrow the Schellenberg might be unpurchasable. This was the opinion which General Goor, who was to lead the first and main assault, most vigorously expressed. There are no signs that Marlborough had any second thoughts, for the advance and deployment of the army continued at the utmost speed; but if any spur had been needed a travel-stained officer who had arrived from the Rhine front in the morning would have supplied it. This was Baron Moltenburg, Prince Eugene's Adjutant-General, who brought the news that Villeroy and Tallard "were marched to Strasburg, having promised a great reinforcement to the Elector by way of the Black Forest." Thus the final decision was agreed to by all.

> . . . And notwithstanding that the infantry was very tired from the long march, that the enemy's entrenchment was found perfected and that the evening was beginning to fall, the Duke of Marlborough proposed and the Imperial Lieutenant-General agreed . . . that the advantageous enemy entrenchment should be attacked that evening with the utmost vigour. . . .[2]

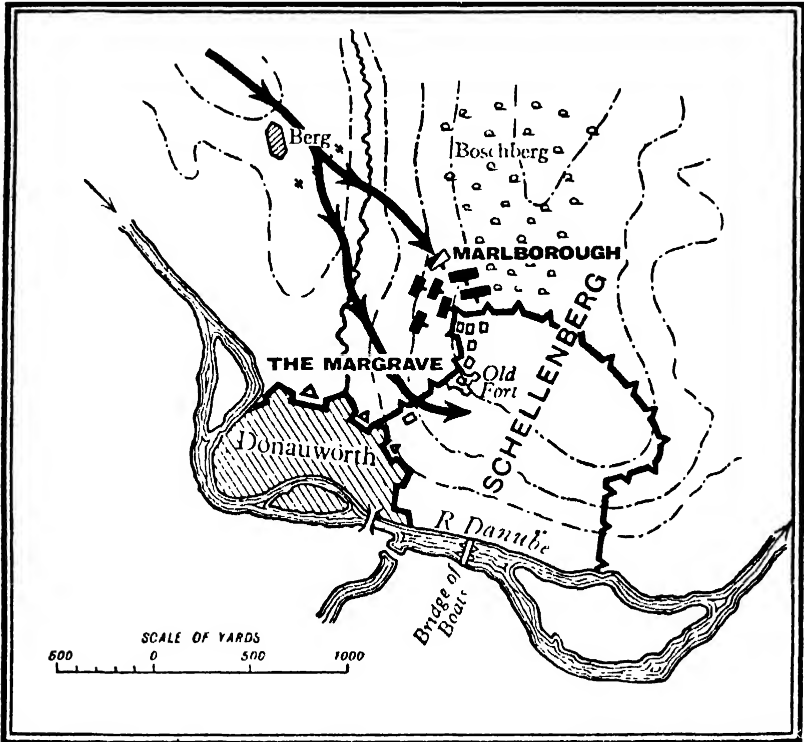
In this action Marlborough used the same method which he afterwards, with modifications, pursued at Blenheim and at Ramillies.

[1] Imperial Official Report; *Feldzüge*, vi, 835 [2] *Loc. cit.*

He thrust a mass of English infantry, conspicuous by their scarlet coats, soon to be dreaded for their prowess, upon what the enemy felt was the key of their position; and he pressed these attacks with a disregard of human life unusual in these prolonged and stately wars. By this means he attracted disproportionate forces of the enemy to the threatened point, and strove with might and main to crash through them. Success here meant victory. If he did not succeed, the dislocation of the enemy's forces produced by this ferocious effort gave him the battle elsewhere upon the denuded portions of their front. Surplus troops from his feints could in every action carry his ultimate attack. This simple, ruthless theme, applied with the highest technical skill, and with cool judgment in the measuring and timing of events, exactly harmonizes with Napoleon's processes, and may well have suggested some of them. It comprised an aggressive dominant of the first order, followed by an opportunist change or a further unfolding, when the enemy's reaction was pronounced. His feints were often realities from which he would above all things have been glad to profit, but which, though failing of success, fatally deranged the enemy's battle, and enabled him to make a second or a further move, foreseen in all its values from the beginning, to which there could be no effective resistance. A hideous violence directed upon a deadly spot, even if frustrated, prepared a victory elsewhere.

By five o'clock the striking-force was already close to the wood half-way up the Schellenberg. To their right upon all the approaches the lines of battle were formed, and extending as the main army came up. The cavalry delivered a short fascine to every officer and soldier in the assaulting infantry. Leaving the Margrave to direct the advance of the army, Marlborough rode to the storming column, the infantry of which was now deployed about three hundred yards broad, in the dip a furlong from the hostile breastworks. Behind the six thousand picked men in three dense lines he had brought eight battalions in support and eight more echeloned right-handed in reserve. These large bodies were sustained by 35 squadrons, including all the English cavalry, formed close behind and somewhat farther to the right of the storm troops. The Margrave's army was now also partly formed, and growing every minute as the marching columns deployed. At about a quarter past six the drums beat, and Lieutenant-General Goor, who commanded the assault, preceded by Mordaunt and the forlorn hope, led the English infantry up the hill. The battery which d'Arco had posted in the angle formed by

the wood and the works fired with deadly effect, while the fortress cannon galled the other flank. The leading troops of the 1st Guards; Ingoldsby's, now the Royal Welch Fusiliers; two battalions of Orkney's, now the Royal Scots; and Meredith's, now the 1st Hamp-



THE STORM OF THE SCHELLENBERG

shires, fell by scores; but the whole array rolled forward at a slow step, the soldiers with shouldered arms and clasping their fascines with their left hands.

When half the distance was covered the Bavarian guns fired case instead of ball[1] and tore long lanes through the ranks, while at the same time the breastworks began to blaze with musketry. At the first volley General Goor fell dead. Undaunted, all the English now raised cheers, heard everywhere above the firing, and shouts of "God Save the Queen!" as they broke into the charge. But an unlucky accident cost them dear. A deep, unexpected gully, dry though made by water, ran across the enemy's front about fifty

[1] Parcels of bullets instead of a single cannon-ball.

yards from the breastworks. Mistaking this for the actual ditch, the troops cast their fascines into it, and thus the survivors of the first line reached the breastworks without the means of crossing them. The rest of the assault coming steadily on behind them, the whole force was brought to a standstill in the unfinished ditch while the exultant Bavarians fired into them from the parapet. A protracted struggle followed. By all reports nothing like the fury of the musketry-fire had ever been heard before. "Incredible" is the word which occurs in various foreign accounts. And all at a few yards' distance into solid masses! At length the assault slackened. Men began to double to the rear, the Bavarians leaped out in counter-attack, and a panic began. But the 1st Guards, who had now lost half their men and nearly all their principal officers, turned, faced the foe, and drove the Bavarians back to their trenches.

We must now introduce a new character to our readers. M. de la Colonie, whose *Memoirs of an Old Campaigner* afford by far the most modern and vivid picture of these wars from the enemy's side, commanded the battalion of French Grenadiers whom Marshal d'Arco had personally posted behind the breastworks at the point where the wood came to an end on the summit of the hill. The colonel did not like the situation any more than did his chief. But as a brave veteran soldier he made the best of it. His rôle was to make quite certain the enemy did not come through the wood or on the far side of it, and, once assured in this respect, to meet the main attack wherever it might fall. For this purpose his grenadiers had to be drawn up in strict parade on ground so high that the breastworks gave them no protection from the artillery. At the first discharge of Colonel Blood's batteries he was himself splashed with the blood and brains of a company commander, who with twelve grenadiers was destroyed by a single cannon-ball. He records the accuracy of the fire, and states that he lost five officers and eighty men out of perhaps six hundred before a musket-shot was fired on either side.

La Colonie's regiment soon moved to a portion of the breastworks. He says:

> The enemy broke into the charge, and rushed at full speed, shouting at the top of their voices, to throw themselves into our entrenchments.
>
> The rapidity of their movements, together with their loud yells, were truly alarming, and as soon as I heard them I ordered our drums to beat the 'charge' so as to drown them with their noise, lest they should have a bad effect upon our people. By this means I animated

my grenadiers, and prevented them hearing the shouts of the enemy, which before now have produced a heedless panic.

The English infantry led this attack with the greatest intrepidity, right up to our parapet, but there they were opposed with a courage at least equal to their own. Rage, fury, and desperation were manifested by both sides, with the more obstinacy as the assailants and assailed were perhaps the bravest soldiers in the world. The little parapet which separated the two forces became the scene of the bloodiest struggle that could be conceived. Thirteen hundred grenadiers . . . bore the brunt of the enemy's attack at the forefront of the Bavarian infantry.

. . . During this first attack, which lasted a good hour or more [actually less than half an hour], we were all fighting hand to hand, hurling them back as they clutched at the parapet; men were slaying or tearing at the muzzles of guns and the bayonets which pierced their entrails; crushing under their feet their own wounded comrades, and even gouging out their opponents' eyes with their nails, when the grip was so close that neither could make use of their weapons. I verily believe that it would have been quite impossible to find a more terrible representation of hell itself than was shown in the savagery of both sides on this occasion.

At last the enemy, after losing more than eight thousand men [*sic*] in this first onslaught, were obliged to relax their hold, and they fell back for shelter to the dip of the slope, where we could not harm them. A sudden calm now reigned amongst us, our people were recovering their breath, and seemed more determined even than they were before the conflict. The ground around our parapet was covered with dead and dying, in heaps almost as high as our fascines; but our whole attention was fixed on the enemy and his movements. We noticed that the tops of his standards still showed at about the same place as that from which they had made their charge in the first instance, leaving little doubt but that they were re-forming before returning to the assault.[1]

It is probable that more than three thousand of the assailants had fallen in this first attack, and lay in a space perhaps three to four hundred yards square. Marlborough immediately ordered a second attempt. And now the generals, brigadiers, and colonels dismounted from their horses, and, with the remnants of Mordaunt's forlorn hope, formed a glorious front line. At the head marched Lieutenant-General Count Styrum, soon mortally wounded; but this renewed effort, though nearly as bloody, was repulsed more easily than the first. Most of the generals and colonels were soon shot down, and

[1] *Memoirs of an Old Campaigner*, p. 185.

the wave recoiled a second time from the terrible defences. But General Lumley brought his squadrons up in close order within musket-shot, thus heartening the infantry and preventing all retreat.

Wratislaw, watch in hand, was spectator from the opposite slope behind Berg. According to his timing, the Margrave's attack began only a quarter of an hour after Marlborough's; Hare's account says half an hour. The discrepancy is no doubt explained by the fact that the storm troops had been massed in the dip hard by the enemy's trenches, whereas the main army deployed nearly a thousand yards farther from them. But at about seven o'clock the Margrave, advancing valiantly at the head of his troops, was already in close action. The Duke in the dip, unmoved by the bloody disaster around him, sent an officer with a platoon of infantry to test the defences farther to the right of those he had attacked. They were found to be almost empty, the bulk of the defenders having been drawn into the struggle by the wood. Marlborough therefore directed the eight battalions of his reserve to attack in the new direction more to the right, in conjunction with the Margrave's general advance. At the same time he called upon his shattered battalions for a new attack over the same deadly ground. Most of the high officers were now killed or wounded, but at about a quarter past seven a new onset was organized and began to move forward, though less confidently than its precursors. So obstinate was the temper at this point that Lumley ordered Lord John Hay's regiment of dragoons, now deathless as the Scots Greys, to dismount and attack with the infantry.

The defenders still resisted with the utmost constancy. But at last Fortune, who had remained insensible to sacrifice, began to declare herself on the side of numbers. Marshal d'Arco had told the governor of Donauwörth to spread two French battalions along the covered way, and had assigned to two Bavarian units the task of guarding the curtain of entrenchments which joined the fortress to the scene of the struggle. But the governor had withdrawn all his troops within the ramparts, and the others were too few to defend their front against the forces now coming into action. The Margrave's horse was shot under him, and he himself was wounded; but the enemy's fire, whether from the trenches or the fortress, could not cope with the crowds of troops which now pressed upon them. The ditches were filled with fascines, and about the same time as Marlborough on the left was organizing his third attack large bodies of German infantry pierced the centre of the entrenchments with little loss. D'Arco was on the spot. The intruders were

charged by his cavalry, but they were already too many to be driven out. The cavalry charge failed, and the Imperialist infantry, pouring through the gap and spreading to the right and left, advanced upon the flank of those who had so bravely and successfully defended the summit of the hill. The Imperial official report states:

> It is impossible to describe the vigour with which the left wing attacked and what a ceaseless fire it had to sustain. On the right wing the fire was by no means so heavy. Indeed, the Imperial troops reached the trenches without firing a shot, threw in the fascines (the English as well as the Imperial cavalry supporting them in the changed line), and after prolonged hand to hand fighting forced their way right into the entrenchments where they were able to maintain themselves in good order. After some twenty minutes more firing they repulsed the enemy reserves, and then came to the help of the left wing, the cavalry attacking the enemy in the rear. This provided the left wing with openings, so that they succeeded in breaking into the entrenchments in all directions. . . .
>
> The continual volleys of the musketeers lasted without a break for a complete hour and twenty minutes, and all experienced officers of both wings acknowledge that they never saw such a heavy or continuous fire, such a hearty attack and vigorous defence, from which it will be readily understood that the losses on both sides must have been great.[1]

What followed is best told by La Colonie.

> Never was joy greater than our own at the very moment when we were in the greatest danger.
>
> We pictured to ourselves all the advantages produced by our successful resistance, and the glory of the action itself, perhaps the most memorable in the history of the world; . . . our ten battalions . . . having sustained, unbroken, two determined assaults of a formidable army. . . . About 7.30 . . . I noticed all at once an extraordinary movement on the part of our infantry, who were rising up and ceasing fire withal. I glanced around on all sides to see what had caused this behaviour, and then became aware of several lines of infantry in greyish-white uniforms on our left flank. From lack of movement on their part, their dress and bearing, I verily believed that reinforcements had arrived for us, and anybody else would have believed the same. No information whatever had reached us of the enemy's success, or even that such a thing was the least likely, so in the error I laboured under I shouted to my men that they were Frenchmen and friends. . . .
>
> Having, however, made a closer inspection, I discovered bunches of straw and leaves attached to their standards, badges the enemy are

[1] *Feldzüge*, vi, 837.

> in the custom of wearing on the occasion of battle, and at that very moment was struck by a ball in the right lower jaw, which wounded and stupefied me to such an extent that I thought it was smashed.[1]

This was the moment when Marlborough's final attack began to struggle forward across the shambles. All resistance now became impossible. The ten battalions, exhausted by their ordeal, and finding their left flank turned and their retreat menaced by overwhelming numbers of fresh troops, retreated a few hundred yards in order, and then broke and ran as hard as they could down through the cornfields towards the river and a pontoon bridge across it. But this had already been broken asunder by the flight of the wagon-train, and the Margrave's forces separated all these men from Donauwörth. Marlborough, entering the captured position with the leading squadrons, had his dazed infantry stopped and re-formed while he launched all the 35 squadrons of English and Prussian cavalry, including the Greys (now remounted), after the fugitives. The pursuit was merciless. The troopers, infuriated by the slaughter of their foot, gave no quarter. "Kill, kill and destroy!"[2] was the word. So they rode them down and killed them all, or chased them into the Danube.

La Colonie, weakened by his wound, hampered by his "richly embroidered uniform" and long, very tight boots, ran for his life. The wife of a Bavarian soldier, also a fugitive, helped him to pull off these impediments. He lay exhausted in the standing corn till a group of horsemen approached, when he plunged into the river. They fired at him from the bank, but the swift current bore him out of their reach, and after a desperate swim he scrambled to shore on the opposite bank, and was succoured by a friendly sergeant. It was the merest chance we did not lose his memoirs.

The battle was over and the allies had won. When the Margrave came riding up to the bloodstained summit he called out to Marlborough, "I am delighted that your proposal has proved such a success." The Duke replied, "I am thankful that you have supported me so well with your troops, and relieved the pressure on me."[3] Of Count d'Arco's fourteen thousand men scarcely five thousand rejoined the Elector's army. The capture of the Schellenberg involved the surrender of Donauwörth, which could not be held for many days against the fire of batteries planted on the hill. The governor did not await this trial. During the night of the 3rd

[1] *Memoirs of an Old Campaigner*, p. 191. [2] Rutland Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 181.
[3] Imperial Official Report, *Feldzüge*, vi, 837.

he quitted the fortress in such haste that he failed either to burn the town or effectively destroy the bridge as ordered. The allies now had their bridgehead on the Danube, and valuable stores found in Donauwörth formed the nucleus of the magazines Marlborough had planned to establish there. The prize had been gained, but the cost of nearly six thousand casualties, fifteen hundred killed outright, was shocking in an age when soldiers were hard to find, and human life narrowly valued. The resources of Nördlingen were overwhelmed by the wounded. All who could walk or crawl were dispersed in the surrounding villages with only the most primitive arrangements. Marlborough's correspondence of the 3rd and 4th is full of directions for their care.

The English were the hardest hit. Out of four thousand in action fifteen hundred were killed or wounded. Many weary, faithful feet that had trudged from the Thames to the Danube here came to rest. The proportion of loss among the senior officers was beyond compare. Six lieutenant-generals were killed and five wounded, together with four major-generals and twenty-eight brigadiers, colonels, and lieutenant-colonels. The gazettes and news-letters of Europe were adorned with the names of those notables, including princes and commanders long celebrated in the wars.

There is a pathos in Addison's tribute to his countrymen:

> How many generous Britons meet their doom,
> New to the field, and heroes in the bloom!
> Th' illustrious youths, that left their native shore
> To march where Britons never marched before,
> (O fatal love of fame! O glorious heat,
> Only destructive to the brave and great!)
> After such toils o'ercome, such dangers past,
> Stretched on Bavarian ramparts breathe their last.[1]

Various reflections may be made upon this action. That it was vital to the army and the campaign to secure this bridgehead on the Danube is obvious. But Marlborough admitted in a letter to Overkirk that the prize *a coûte un peu cher*. It is arguable, though by no means provable, that if he had waited till the 3rd and brought the whole army into play on both sides of the wood, the enemy even though reinforced could not have held so extended a line, and possibly life might have been spared. But the fear of the reinforcements was decisive upon him.

England, though startled by the casualties, was proud of the

[1] *The Campaign.*

victory and thrilled by the prowess of her troops. But it was soon easy to put another complexion on the event, and the Tories were not alone when they asked, "What was the sense of capturing a hill in the heart of Germany at such heavy loss? Were there not many such hills?" And if it cost six thousand men to rout eight thousand Bavarians (for so they put it) how many would be wanted to dispose of the armies of the Elector and Marsin, reinforced by those of Villeroy and Tallard? Moreover, it was said both at The Hague and in London that the victory belonged to the Margrave. Marlborough had plunged on obstinately into the strongest part of the enemy's line and squandered life to no purpose, while the Margrave, experienced soldier, had pounced upon the gap in the defences, and saved his impetuous colleague from utter defeat.

The Court of Hanover, whose troops had suffered more than a thousand casualties, took a similar view. The Electress Sophia in a letter to Leibnitz wrote:

> The Elector is saddened at the loss of so many brave subjects in consequence of *the mistakes made by the great general Marlborough.* He says that the Margrave of Baden did very much better, and that without him there would have been complete failure, as on the other wing proper measures had not been taken.[1]

The Dutch, who the year before had endeavoured to placate Marlborough by the medal "Victorious without slaughter," were now out of humour with him, and, resentful of his distant operations, struck a medal for the Schellenberg, on the face of which they displayed "a busto of Prince Louis" with the inscription, "The enemy defeated and put to flight and their camp plundered at Schellenberg near Donauwörth 1704." This, as will be seen, did less than justice to their Captain-General, and inadequately comprehended the strategic setting in which their own fortunes were involved.

[1] Leibnitz, *Werke* (1873), ix, 91.

Chapter Eighteen

THE DEVASTATION OF BAVARIA

1704—JULY

FAME and fortune, which had hitherto journeyed with Marlborough, halted on the frontiers of Bavaria and awaited his return. The month which followed the battle of the Schellenberg is gloomy for his record. It would seem that his vision and calculation had carried him no farther than this. He had foreseen with uncanny accuracy all the milestones of his long march and the reactions upon friend and foe which would be imposed as each one was passed. He had marked Donauwörth as the gateway by which he would enter the promised land. He was there. The European situation, military and political, was for the moment transformed. But what was he to do next? He had always made it plain that he meant to compel the Elector to return to his allegiance under threat of destroying his country. Accordingly when, on the 8th, the allied army crossed the Lech, they began to burn and lay waste all within their reach. In vain did the despairing inhabitants offer the largest sums of money they could scrape together to placate the wrath of the invaders. Marlborough could have enriched himself vastly by such a process. The precedent of Cohorn in the Pays de Waes only a year before was but too well known to him. He does not seem to have thought of it. His military needs conquered both his avarice and his humanity. He replied—"nobly," says Lediard—"The forces of the Queen of England were not come into Bavaria to get money, but to bring their prince to reason." Thus the army advanced to Aicha, which they reached on the 22nd, spreading terror on all sides and leaving a blackened trail behind them.

The Elector had not awaited the forcing of the rivers. To tarry was to be cut off. As soon as the news of the Schellenberg reached him he evacuated his entrenched camp beyond the Danube and retreated to Augsburg. He fortified himself in a strong position partly protected by the Lech and under the cannon of the fortress. Here he hoped to maintain himself until a new French army came

to his aid. He had in fact no other military choice. However, his retreat had carried him forty miles farther from his hoped-for succours, and his weakness prevented him from protecting the country. Simultaneously he gave up Neuburg and withdrew its garrison to Ingolstadt, the sole fortress remaining in his hands on the long course of the Danube from Ulm to Passau.

Marlborough to Godolphin

[DONAUWÖRTH]
July 4, 1704

*I sent an express yesterday to acquaint Her Majesty with the success we had on the second. The garrison of this place, observing that we used our utmost diligence to make a bridge over the Danube, set fire to their magazines and with the last of their troops burnt the bridge, which was not in our powers to hinder; but we came so quick into the town that there is but little of it burnt, so that we are now taking what care we can for the forming a magazine, and we hope to get our bridges finished, so that we may pass the Danube to-morrow, upon which we no ways doubt that the Elector will be obliged to cover his army with the River Lech, which will oblige him to eat his own country, and I think make it almost impossible for the troops to join him which are promised him by Mons. de Villeroy. If he will ever treat, it must be now; for if we get a passage over the Lech before he gets more troops his country is ruined; and you may assure Her Majesty that I shall not be amused by any treaty, but pursue the advantage we now have over him.

P. Louis has desired me to make his compliments to Her Majesty and I believe he will very soon give himself the honour of writing. He does assure me that *he will act in everything as I shall think it best for the common cause*; and we are agreed that whatever colours, cannon, or other ammunition are taken one-half shall be for Her Majesty and the other for the Emperor. The value of this will not be great, but for after-time it will remain for the honour of Her Majesty in their history. As I have no Deputies of the States in this army, I am forced to give money for all the extraordinaries, so that you will easily believe that the ten thousand pounds which I made serve in Flanders will fall very short here; for there the Dutch paid all the carts and horses that were furnished by the country, and all the pay that is given to the soldiers when they work, all which I am now forced to do, as far as concerns the 86 squadrons and 44 battalions which is the number of troops I command. Those which compose the right wing commanded by Prince Louis are only 24 battalions and 85 squadrons by which you may see the certain ruin they must have had if the troops I command had not been here. Having been a-horseback ever since daylight I must defer answering your last two letters till the next opportunity.

John to Sarah

DONAUWÖRTH
July 4

I writ to my dearest soul yesterday, giving her an account of God's having blessed us with a victory the day before, the effect of which has been that we are now masters of this town, which will be of great advantage to us; since it will oblige the Elector to retire into his own country, and give us the opportunity of posting ourselves between him and the French troops he expects. We should not have taken this place in ten days, if the garrison had not been frightened by the action they saw two days ago; for the Bavarians were under the shot [*i.e.*, the protection] of their cannon, when we forced them.

I am in great hopes we shall succeed, which will be for the eternal honour of Her Majesty; for not only the country, but the generals and soldiers all own their being saved, to her generous proceedings; as in truth it is very plain, that if Her Majesty's troops had not been here, the Elector of Bavaria had been now in Vienna.

Since this action I have hardly had time to sleep, for Lieutenant-General Goor helped me in a great many things, which I am now forced to do myself, till I can find some other officer I can rely on for it.[1]

Marlborough to Godolphin

July 6

We are now taking care for a passage over this river of Lech, and then we shall be in the heart of the Elector's country. If he will ever make propositions it must be then. The Marshals de Villeroy and Tallard are separated. The latter is to join the elector of Bavaria, and the Duke de Villeroy is to act on the Rhine. Prince Eugene will be obliged to divide his army; so that he may observe each of their motions. *As for his person, it will be with that army that is to observe M. Tallard. . . .*

By all the intelligence we have, our last action has very much disheartened the enemy, so that if we can get over the river to engage them, I no ways doubt but God will bless us with the victory. Our greatest difficulty is that of making our bread follow us; for the troops that I have the honour to command cannot subsist without it, and the Germans that are used to starve cannot advance without us. The duke of Wirtemberg has sent orders to his country for two hundred wagons, to help bring on our stores, and I have promised to pay them for a month, which time I hope will finish our business in this country.[2]

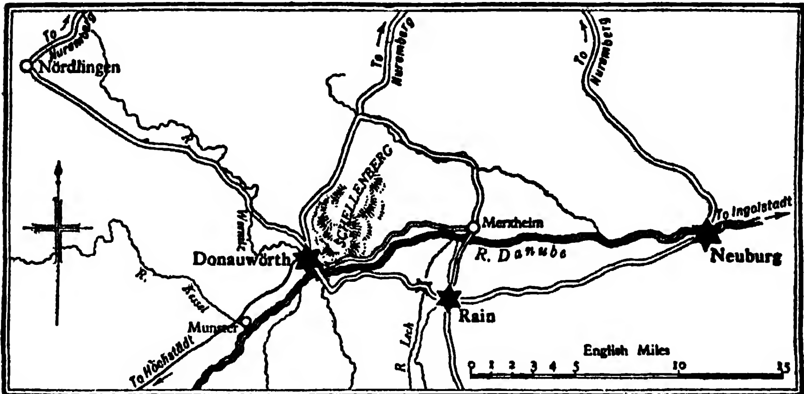
John to Sarah

July 9

The garrison which we have at Neuburg will give us the advantage of having bread for the army out of Franconia. I should not trouble

[1] Coxe, i, 366. [2] *Ibid.*, 367.

you with this, but that I am extremely pleased to know, that I have it now in my power that the poor soldiers shall not want bread. I know that I make my court to my dear life, when I assure her that I take all the pains I am capable of to serve the public, and that I have great reason to hope that everything will go on well; for I have the pleasure to find all the officers willing to obey, without knowing any other reason than that it is my desire, which is very different from what it was in Flanders, where I was obliged to have the consent of a council of war for everything I undertook.[1]



THE TRIANGLE

The small fortified town of Rain, on the Lech, resisted for seven days. La Colonie and the remains of his Grenadiers had rallied there, after escaping from the battlefield, and, strengthened by several hundreds of local troops, their stubbornness required siege operations. Now was the need for the Imperial siege train which Marlborough had been promised would be ready. It was late, weak, and ill-equipped. The artillery which the Empire was to provide from Mainz and Philippsburg had not arrived. Not till the 14th did the first "great guns" from Nuremberg make their appearance. Trenches had been opened meanwhile, and the bombardment begun. Ammunition was scanty, and the gunners unskilful. It was thought prudent to induce the garrison to capitulate by the offer of easy terms, and on the 16th they marched out with the honours of war, and were allowed to rejoin their army at Augsburg. La Colonie plumes himself, not without reason, on this result.

Marlborough, who had promptly occupied Neuburg, had now a satisfactory technical position, at the head of his communications

[1] Coxe, i, 370.

with Nuremberg, astride of the Danube and the Lech, and with enough fortified bridges to enable him to manœuvre with ease on either side of both these rivers. The defended triangle Donauwörth—Rain—Neuburg was the central structure upon which all his movements depended. He could hold out his right hand for a junction with Eugene, and with his left he dominated Bavaria. He could concentrate for battle on either side of the Danube. It is important here to notice also that as soon as the Elector had quitted the Lauingen-Dillingen lines Marlborough had them levelled by local labour, and placed small garrisons in the towers of Dillingen and Höchstädt. This foresight was later rewarded.

Until Tallard joined the Elector the numbers of the allies were sufficient to pin the Elector in Augsburg, and also undertake an important siege. Of course, Munich was the prize, and lack of heavy artillery and siege stores was decisive against this. Twelve twenty-four pounders were all that could be gathered.

Wratislaw wrote:

> Marlborough's consternation at it is indescribable; for if we had not had the present successes, the whole campaign might have had to be ended fruitlessly owing to his departure; but now one will try to make the best of it.[1]

Marlborough wrote to Godolphin at the end of the month:

> For want of cannon and the King of France doing all he can to succour the Elector, we shall be obliged to take measures such as our wants will permit us; but you may be assured that if they give us any opportunity, we shall be glad to come to a battle; for that would decide the whole; because our troops are very good. But our misfortune is that we want everything for attacking towns, otherwise this would have been dated from Munich.[2]

And again to Sarah:

> The army I am joined with has neither cannon nor money, which are two very necessary things for success, but I am very far from complaining, knowing very well that they are as desirous of having it as I am. . . .[3]

The threads of negotiation with the Elector had not been severed. Marlborough earnestly desired a settlement. The transfer of Bavaria from the party of the Two Crowns to the Grand Alliance was the hinge on which the whole war seemed at this time to turn. For the

[1] To the Emperor, Ebermergen, July 4, 1704; *Feldzüge*, vi, 841.
[2] July 31, 1704; Coxe, i, 373. [3] *Ibid.*

reasons which have been explained he did not trust the Margrave as an intermediary, and still less would he trust Frederick I. Heinsius had long opened to him, and had recently warned him of, the Prussian designs. But a direct negotiation in the field with the faithful, accomplished Wratislaw as the agent at once of the Empire and the Maritime Powers, even if it led to nothing, must certainly be tested to the end.

Wratislaw set the matter before the Emperor in a pithy dispatch, which shows incidentally his feelings towards the Margrave.

> As to disgusting the King of Prussia, there is nothing in it, for this King has himself written to Marlborough that he, Marlborough, must now conclude the treaty *in loco.* As far as the Margrave is concerned there is even less difficulty. He has often said it was his business to conduct the militaria but not the negotia; besides he can be handled with the greatest ease, since *there can be no hesitation in trusting him with what will have to be communicated to the Elector himself in a few hours.*
>
> *The Margrave is lying in bed with his wound, or I should say contusion of the toe*, and we were with him yesterday. . . .[1]

It was Max Emmanuel's interest to bargain with the allies for peace, and with France for help. No appeal to France could be so potent as the open threat to change sides. There was besides the hope of gaining time from the enemy. The plight to which his ambitions had led him was unenviable. Huddled round Augsburg with no news of succour, he was condemned to watch the torment of his country. The confederate generals had, as we have seen, agreed from the outset that while they treated with him seriously for a separate peace they would not relax or alter the course of their military operations. They proceeded to ravage Bavaria before its ruler's eyes. From many points on the horizon rose pillars of smoke. By every pathway open his terrified subjects implored from their prince either protection or peace. At the same time Wratislaw, sceptical but persuasive, offered grand bribes. If Max Emmanuel would return to the loyalties from which he had been seduced by the lure of the Imperial Crown there should be full forgiveness. He might resume his place among the Germanic princes of the Empire. His dominions should be restored to him. Nay, they should even be increased. Pfalz-Neuburg and Burgau would be added to his hereditary lands upon the guarantee of the Queen of England, the Emperor undertaking to compensate the lawful owners. Two hundred thousand crowns would be paid to

[1] Wratislaw to the Emperor, Ebermergen, July 4; *Feldzüge*, vi, 841.

repair the damage—which was, however, increasing daily. Marlborough, now duly empowered from London, added the promise to hire twelve thousand Bavarian troops for service in Italy at the current rates of pay. On two points only was the Emperor insistent. "You must and shall at all times reject the claim to the title of King, and also refuse the French troops permission to depart freely."[1]

On the other hand stood Marshal Marsin and the French army. Under the duress of rapine the Elector had dispersed his own troops throughout his territory to guard towns and properties, especially his own. In Augsburg the French were far the stronger. The Great King had sent them there at his request. If he made his peace with the Emperor what would Marlborough do with them? He asked through his secretary, Reichard, who had been in touch with the allied headquarters since June 6, that they should be granted safe-conduct home. The most that Marlborough would allow was that he should not be compelled himself to fight against them. Nevertheless, the negotiations went forward, and by July 12 what was virtually a draft agreement had been framed. The Elector had even fixed the Monastery of Fürstenfeld as the place, and the 14th as the date, when he would himself personally meet Wratislaw to sign the bond.

But now Marsin in dire straits used his power. He suggested to Max Emmanuel that the allies might well seize his person and make him a prisoner of State. Further he declared that if he went to the rendezvous, the French troops would burn their baggage, march at once towards the Rhine, and shake the dust of Bavaria off their feet. It is possible even that these threats did not stop there. Certainly the feelings of the French officers can be understood. Under their weight the Elector yielded. He would not go himself. But in the absence of any further help from France he insisted that the parleys should be kept alive. Marsin and his generals held a council of war at which the Elector was present. Each gave his opinion. Here it appeared that the main anxiety of the French was to get out of the country safely. One of the generals, Blainville, whom we shall presently see for the last time on the field of Blenheim, voiced a latent opinion that the best that could now be hoped for by Louis XIV was the neutrality of the Elector and the escape of the French army. Max Emmanuel seized upon this as ground for continuing to treat, though not in person. He had meanwhile been confronted with the menace that Marlborough would systematically

[1] The Emperor to Wratislaw, July 23, 1704; *Feldzüge*, vi, 845.

burn and destroy the whole of Bavaria, which lay open to his cavalry, unless he came to terms.

On the 13th the Electress, daughter of the hero King of Poland, John Sobieski, came to Augsburg. She cared little for the French and much for Bavaria. She implored her husband to make peace. Marsin spent the day in fierce anxiety. But on the morning of the 14th, when Wratislaw was already waiting at the Monastery of Fürstenfeld, came the longed-for letter from Tallard. Written on the 8th, it announced that Tallard and his whole army of 40 battalions and 60 squadrons were marching through the Black Forest upon Villingen. This was decisive. The Elector, unstable, unprincipled, but torn by strains which few could bear, saw once again his dream of empire revive. He decided that Bavaria must burn. He sent Reichard to the monastery to explain to Wratislaw that Marshal Tallard was coming to his aid with thirty-five thousand men, and that therefore his 'honour'—this had not arisen before—precluded him from entertaining the proposals, which were otherwise satisfactory.

Marlborough had not counted much upon the negotiations. He had known for some time that Tallard was on the march. He had wondered when the news would reach the Elector. Still, the refusal, and even more the reason for it, were grave for him. The arrival of Tallard would end his stay in Bavaria. The failure of the Empire to provide an adequate siege train as promised made any first-class siege most uncertain. He had not been able to agree upon a satisfactory plan of action with the Margrave. That General talked of Ingolstadt. But this was a strong fortress. The means for taking it were probably lacking, and its investment spelt retreat from Bavaria. Finally, the Margrave had protested against the policy of devastation. From about the 12th it had been stopped. Marlborough's apologists have presented us with abundant proof that he loathed the whole process. He would not allow, we are told, the British troops, or at least the British cavalry, to take part in it. It is pretended that the Margrave as the Imperial General would naturally have the chief say in a work of this kind upon the soil of the Empire. The responsibility, we are assured, was only indirectly Marlborough's. But this is the reverse of the truth. Not only the Margrave, but the Emperor, objected strongly to what they considered the brutalities of a foreign gang, on whom however they depended for salvation.

Wratislaw took Marlborough's view. The friction between the

two headquarters was aggravated by a difference upon a hateful issue. The burnings were for the time being suspended. But no other plan was put forward. It is possible the confederates might have taken Munich at certain moments in the campaign, not by a siege, but by something like a raid. But the Margrave was averse from running risks, and Marlborough in unwonted perplexity declared that it was for the commander who knew the country to propose the plan. Thus nothing was done. A large brewery was organized at Aicha for the English troops, and the army marched on the 22nd to Friedberg to confront the Elector and Marsin four miles away in their strong position around Augsburg. There seemed to be no possibility of bringing them to battle. Meanwhile the negotiations, in a broken-backed condition, still lingered on. The threat of burning all Bavaria still hung over the Elector, and Tallard, though nothing further had been heard of him by either side, was presumably approaching. His arrival would bring about a crisis. Tallard had only to move along the north bank of the Danube against Marlborough's communications alike with Eugene and with his Nuremberg supplies to bring about a battle somewhere between Ulm and Donauwörth. If the Elector joined himself to Tallard Marlborough must recross the Danube with an army strong enough to fight them both. In either case the reign of the allies in Bavaria was limited. What could be done must be done quickly.

John to Sarah

July 13

Since my last I have had the happiness of yours of the 13th and 16th of last month, and am very sorry to see that you have had a return of the illness that I saw you have once at St Albans. I conjure you not to neglect taking advice and doing what may be proper for preventing it in future; for if you will make me happy now, you must live long, and not have melancholy thoughts of what is passed; for I do assure you I place all my hopes in ending my days quietly with you, and to be contented with the children that it has pleased God to continue to us.

My blood is so heated that I have had for the last three days a violent head-ache; but, not having stirred out of my chamber this day, I find myself much easier, so that I hope to-morrow morning to be very well. Lord Treasurer will let you know all the news that I have writ to Mr Secretary Harley. Pray tell my dear children that I hope in ten days time to have so much leisure as to write to them. I hope in God my next will tell you I am quite well.[1]

[1] Coxe, i, 371.

Marlborough to Godolphin

CAMP AT BURCKHEIM
July 16, 1704

*I had the favour of yours of the 20th of the last month yesterday, by which I find our business in Portugal goes very ill. I think you have taken the only way that is capable of setting it right. You will have seen by my two last letters to Mr Secretary that we were in treaty with the Elector, who was to have signed on the 14th, but instead of meeting the Comte de Wratislaw, he sent his secretary to let him know that he had received assurances that the Maréchal de Tallard would join him with 35,000 men by the 22nd, so that it was not for his honour, nor in his power to quit the French. But, as we have heard nothing from Prince Eugene, we are very confident that Tallard is not advanced as the Elector thinks. We being in the Elector's country puts it out of our power of hindering this junction: *but I depend very much on the vigilance of P. Eugene.* We have sent him 4000 horse as he desired with assurances of more troops if he thinks they can come in time: for should Tallard join the Elector, it would draw this business to a greater length than is for the good of the Common Cause. For if we could be so happy as to finish suddenly by a treaty; we should not fail of sending troops to the Duke of Savoy; but it must be Mr Hill's business to see that they are employed as you seem to desire in yours of the 20th of the last month . . . We are doing all the mischief we can to this country, in order to make the Elector think of saving what we cannot reach; for as we advance we burn and destroy; but if this should not make him come to a treaty, I am afraid it may at last do ourselves hurt for want of what we destroy. The town of Rain has this day capitulated, so that we march to-morrow, and I am so tired that I have not strength to say more than that I am ever yours. . . .

John to Sarah

FRIEDBERG
July 23, 1704

*I have none of yours to answer, and, having been on horseback most part of this day, I shall not be able to write much to you. We are now in the finest camp I ever saw, and out of my own window I can see both armies. The Elector expects M. de Tallard should join him in four or five days. When he does I do not think he will venture to quit the strong camp he now is in. If he does not his whole country is in our power; for we have it behind us, and he may be sure, if he does not make peace, we will destroy it before we leave it. You will I hope believe that my nature suffers when I see so many fine places burnt, and that must be burnt if the Elector will not hinder it.

I shall never be easy and happy till I am quietly with you, my dearest soul, whom I love above my own life.

Marlborough to Godolphin

FRIEDBERG
July 27, 1704

*Yours of the 27th and 30th of the last month I have received, by which I find Ld Galway is to be gone in two days. I no ways doubt but this change will have a good effect in Portugal; but would it not have been as well for the Service, if it had been done with less harshness to the Duke of Schomberg; *for it is impossible to give a more mortal stroke to a General than to recall him in the middle of a campaign.*

I am glad that Donauwörth has been worth something to you, which may enable you to bear the loss of any other wagers that you may have made; for all the great boastings the French made of what they would do on the Rhine are vanished and they are now changing the scene. Monsr de Tallard after having attacked Villingen five days without success raised the siege, and was to be at Dutlingen [?] the 24th, so that he may be the 1st or 2nd of the next month with the Elector. We are also assured that Monsr de Villeroy has orders to march with those under his command into the country of Würtemberg, that there will be no men left in Alsace, but such as refused to pass the Rhine. *These resolutions of the French have hindered the Elector from making his peace, and have brought the seat of War into this Country*, so that we must now take our measures for the finishing this campaign on this side, which I still hope with the blessing of God will end for our advantage.

You will know by the letters from Vienna the orders that are given for the reinforcing the Emperor's army in Italy which takes away some troops that were ordered to reinforce us here. However, I can't but be pleased that they are sent to that country; for if we should miscarry here, it will not be so much for the want of men, as for that of Cannon.[1]

Thus the month in Bavaria passed. These precious days gained by toil and daring slipped swiftly by. Tallard was drawing near, and, more dominating than Tallard, winter was but three months away. Parliament must meet in November. London and The Hague would inquire why their troops were so far afield; what authority had there been for this excursion; and what had their Captain-General to show for it all. The shock of the Schellenberg had passed. The helplessness of the Empire to provide the promised siege train had robbed that victory of its natural fruits. Neither Munich nor Ulm could be taken. The Elector had been neither crushed nor gained. We see Marlborough for a while in the flicker of that baleful sunlight which was to play at Moscow upon Napoleon,

[1] Extract.

who also sought a treaty or a battle at the end of a long march far from home.

We left Eugene at the end of June at Rastatt with his army hastily jumbled together guarding the Lines of Stollhofen and watching Villeroy and Tallard beyond the Rhine. Although now the commander of an army in the field, subordinate in rank to the Margrave, Eugene was president of the Emperor's war council, and day by day from his headquarters he supervised the theatres of war in Hungary, on Lake Garda, and in Piedmont. He gave advice and he gave decisions upon the whole war policy of the Empire, and above all he preserved his strategic relation to Marlborough in Bavaria, upon which everything hung. At this moment we can perceive and admire the comprehensive and flexible quality of Eugene: commander of an all-important local operation, the defender of the lines; a pledged essential unit in Marlborough's combination to the eastward; and the supreme director of the military efforts of a vast, disintegrating Empire. He discharged all these variously graded functions with perfect harmony. Like Marlborough, he could conduct a local action and ride in person with the charge without losing in the slightest degree his general sense of values. Like him, he could mix, sword in hand, in a mêlée and, if not injured, emerge with judgment undistorted.

Eugene soon became conscious of the lack of results in Bavaria. He imparted his misgivings to the Duke of Savoy in an illuminating letter. After explaining that it was his task, and likewise that of Wratislaw, "to contribute to a good understanding" between the Margrave and Marlborough, he wrote, "Up to now everything has gone well enough between them; but I fear greatly that this will not last. And to tell the truth since the Donauwörth action I cannot admire their performances."

Of Marlborough we have his impressions from their long talks at Gross Heppach.

> To draw a true picture of Marlborough: here is a man of high quality, courageous, extremely well-disposed, and with a keen desire to achieve something, all the more as he would be ruined in England should he return empty-handed. With all these qualities he understands thoroughly that one cannot become a general in a day, and he is diffident about himself. General Goor, who was killed in the Donauwörth affair, was the kind of man on whom he leaned, and he is a grave loss at this juncture, being a man of courage and capacity, who by all accounts

> brought about the attack that evening, sure that to wait for the next morning, as most of them wanted, would have been to waste half the infantry without succeeding. I have been made conscious of the death of this man by seeing the Duke, according to the news, more than a little hesitating in his decisions.
>
> They have been counting upon the Elector coming to terms. They claim of course that no time has been lost over that; nevertheless since the action nothing has been done, although the enemy so far has let them have all the time they wanted. They have amused themselves with the siege of Rain and burning a few villages instead of, according to my ideas, which I have put before them plainly enough, marching straight upon the enemy. If unable to attack him; take up a position, encamp half an hour away from him, and by their being so superior in cavalry in an open country, cut his communications with Augsburg and Bavaria and stop him from foraging; it being certain that he has no supplies in Augsburg and would have been obliged to quit that post. Then would be the time to exploit the retreat and pursue the enemy so closely that he would not have been able to avoid a battle. It was even in their power to prevent his junction with Tallard, who is already near Villingen and has delayed there longer than I can explain. . . . But to put things plainly, your Royal Highness, I don't like this slowness on our side, the enemy will have time to form magazines of food and forage, and all our operations will become the harder.[1]

This does less than justice to Marlborough's difficulties, the lack of artillery and supplies and the unavoidable delay in taking Rain. It underrates the considerable magazines at Augsburg, which were certainly sufficient to maintain the Elector's army till long after the date when Tallard could join him. But most of all it ignores the perpetual annoyance of a joint command. Even with the utmost goodwill on both sides, even with the understanding that the general direction of the campaign lay with Marlborough, the process was fatal to sustained vigorous action. But there was no longer goodwill between the commanders, nor even a pretence of it between their circles. The story of the Schellenberg became an irritant, and the officers and troops of the two allies asserted the claims of their respective chiefs to the honours of victory. The attitude of the English was judged by the Imperialists to be patronizing. The Margrave's men complained of their saying "that they had come to Bavaria to put spirit into the Imperialists and spurs into the French." We know enough of Marlborough to be sure that he was not the

[1] Undated; *Feldzüge*, vi, Supp., 131.

author of such a phrase. He never boasted, he never joked; he rarely coined a phrase, and never uttered a taunt. No such assurances can be made about our countrymen.

On the other hand, Marlborough's correspondence shows a real dislike of the Margrave and a repulsion from his military outlook. It was increasingly difficult to come to any agreement with him. Prince Louis now made objections to all Marlborough's proposals. He longed to divide the armies and escape from this tutelage and interference. When it was seen that there was no use in remaining any longer at Friedberg, Marlborough and the Margrave at last agreed that the siege of Ingolstadt was the best measure still open. This had been Prince Louis's wish ever since the capture of Rain on the 16th. The siege train, such as it was, was assembling at Neuburg. To Harley and other correspondents Marlborough wrote on July 31:

> We are endeavouring to get together thirty pieces of cannon at Neuburg for the siege of Ingolstadt, which, when we have taken it, will make us masters of the Danube from Ulm to Passau and by that means we shall always have a free passage into Bavaria.[1]

As a preliminary to the siege it was decided to move the army back to Schrobenhausen, two marches to the eastward.

Before making what was obviously a retrograde movement from Friedberg Marlborough demanded a renewed and far more extensive devastation of Bavaria. The Margrave again objected. He would not make war "like a hussar," but only "like an experienced general." He did not on this date, July 28, know that the Emperor had expressed the strongest abhorrence of the policy. Marlborough was insistent. Wratislaw, who agreed with Marlborough, challenged the Margrave fiercely. Hard words passed between them. Was this another instance of his pro-Bavarian sympathies? Under this pressure the Margrave gave way. More than this: Marlborough required that the Imperial cavalry should do the work. The Margrave again submitted. Later he wrote to the Emperor:

> As the result of the ravaging, the fires, and the forced contributions, in a short time there may be little of Bavaria left. I hope that I have taken the right course for Your Majesty's service in accepting other people's opinion.[2]

Sixty squadrons were now sent forth upon this lamentable duty. Not only on either side of the great Munich road, but as far as they

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 381.   [2] Röder, ii, 65.

Chapter Nineteen

MARSHAL TALLARD

1704—JULY

AT the moment of his setting out upon his fatal expedition Tallard was one of the most distinguished figures in the circle of Louis XIV. Not only was he reputed an excellent soldier with recent exploits to his credit, but his diplomatic qualities and experience had raised him to the highest Ambassadorial posts. He combined a knowledge of war with a wide outlook upon European politics. He might have been a Foreign Minister of France if he had not been needed as a Marshal. He was a great gentleman, of polish, taste, and learning, who wielded the pen, though at too great length, as readily as the sword. It was with deep misgivings, which have already been described, that he obeyed the commands of the King to proceed to the rescue of Bavaria. He had protested that neither the policy nor the force supplied him was suited to the occasion. He was reluctant and perplexed as he entered his coach, and with his son at his side journeyed towards his ruin.

On June 28 Tallard's army had begun to move towards the Strasburg bridges. On July 1 it crossed the Rhine, and, turning away from the lines, wended southward up its valley with obvious intention of marching towards the Danube. This confirmed the news which Eugene had sent by the responsible officer who had reached Marlborough when he was about to storm the Schellenberg. Even more remarkable was Marlborough's own Intelligence, for on July 3 he already knew almost exactly the number of battalions and squadrons which the King had so secretly assigned to Tallard only ten days before at Versailles.[1] A messenger could hardly have covered the distance quicker. The Marshal, his army crawling on its belly, being fed with great difficulty along the broken tracks which threaded the Black Forest, arrived on July 16 before the town of Villingen. This was a properly garrisoned second-class fortress of the Holy Roman Empire, made to block the only serviceable road.

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 331; Pelet, iv, 496.

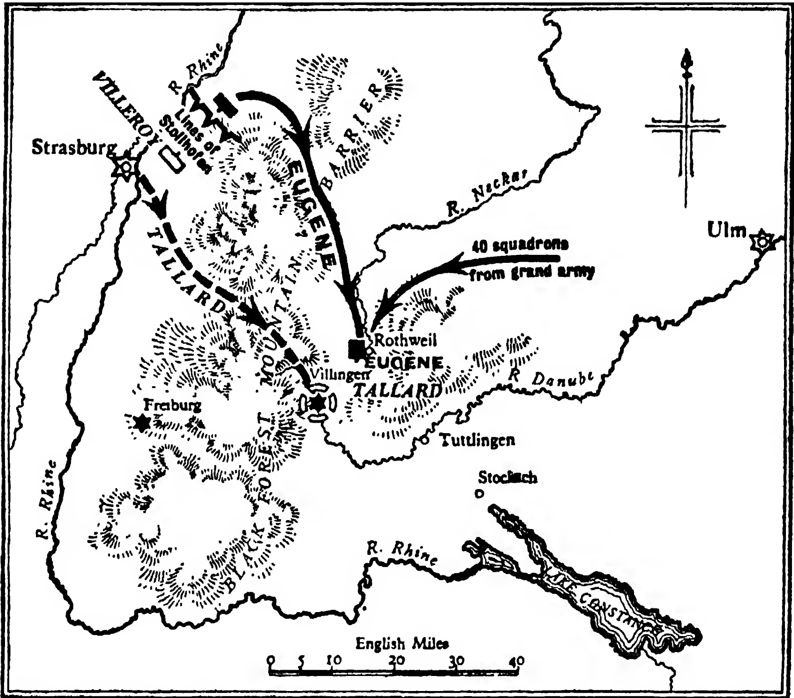
Tallard's supply problem had not been solved even up to this point. He required another week to bring his army through the barren country and to carry forward his food. He wished to take Villingen and afterwards Rothweil, and open a regular line of communications from the Rhine valley to the Danube plain. He had written to the King a month before that Villingen "by itself could not last two days."[1] He had brought some siege cannon ahead with him, and he planned to reduce Villingen with his vanguard while the rest of his troops and their supply-trains trickled forward through the gorges and caught him up. When the French cannon opened fire upon the fortress on the 16th the Marshal was in a more sanguine mood. A report had reached him during his march of a battle on the Danube on July 2 in which the allies had lost fourteen thousand men; "the Prince of Baden having been wounded and all his Generals killed or wounded." Not only did Tallard believe this tale, but, since it came from enemy sources, he thought it was probably understated.

No one can comprehend the movements leading up to the battle of Blenheim unless he realizes that Eugene and Marlborough were working like two lobes of the same brain. They were in constant touch with one another. Not only were messengers sent with dispatches, but trusted, proved, high-class officers, who saw through the eyes of the commanders, rode to and fro upon the three-days journey. Sometimes there was a gap of three or four days, but we may assume that the mutual understanding was very complete between Marlborough, holding on to his Danube triangle, and Eugene at Rastatt, behind the Stollhofen lines. Now, on July 18, when Tallard is cannonading Villingen, Eugene with eighteen thousand men has slipped away from the Lines of Stollhofen and presents himself at Rothweil, whence he glares at Tallard. If Tallard is to join the Elector, Eugene will keep pace with him and join Marlborough in good time. But what will happen if in his absence Villeroy storms the Lines of Stollhofen? Everything must be done by Eugene to prevent this; but if it happens, the misfortune must be endured for the sake of the greater climax maturing on the Danube. Thus we see that one facet of the art of war is the disregarding of secondary forfeits, however painful or disastrous in themselves.

Late on July 16 Tallard first learned the truth about the Schellenberg. Earlier messages from Marsin had miscarried; but now he knew that the allies, whatever their losses at the Donauwörth

[1] Tallard to the King, Lauterburg, June 16, 1704; Pelet, iv, 481.

bridgehead, were ravaging Bavaria, while the Elector and Marsin were penned around Augsburg. Marsin's letters left him in no doubt that Bavaria would desert to the allies unless effective help came at once. He was now committed to the siege of Villingen. The garrison proved stubborn. They resisted with spirit. The French batteries



TALLARD ATTACKS VILLINGEN

were awkwardly placed, and suffered severely from the fortress fire. Red-hot shot set light to the town; but the German inhabitants extinguished the flames. Meanwhile Eugene in considerable force had appeared at Rothweil and threatened to intervene. For Tallard to pursue the siege to its conclusion was probably to be involved in a festering local crisis; and meanwhile no aid to the hard-pressed and faltering Elector. Tallard decided, no doubt rightly, to abandon the particular for the general situation. Marsin assured him that he could keep him fed upon the forward march. He therefore on the 22nd, after four days' bombardment, raised the siege of Villingen, put his army on short commons, and made for the Upper Danube at Tuttlingen, whence he reached Ulm, hungry, tired, but essentially

intact, on July 29. He was disturbed to find in that fortress only six thousand sacks of flour.

Eugene's movements after Tallard skirted round Villingen and took his plunge are easy to understand, now that we know the whole story. From Rothweil, where he was joined by 40 squadrons sent from Marlborough's army, he could come to Donauwörth and link up with the Marlborough triangle at least four days before Tallard could reach Ulm, and a week before he could join the Elector at Augsburg But Eugene had to think constantly of Villeroy and the Lines of Stollhofen, now only thinly held by the corps of the Prince of Anhalt. He wished therefore to give the impression to the enemy by spies and deserters, who were numerous, that he was moving back to his old position. Accordingly, after repairing Villingen he marched with ostentation twenty miles northward to Tübingen, which he reached on the 27th of July. At that point he vanished from the French view among the desolate hills of Swabia.

Frequent instructions reached Villeroy from the King, who at Versailles received news from all quarters. Louis XIV was too far from Strasburg to control the swiftly changing scene. At first, impressed by Eugene's strength upon the Rhine, he had ordered his Marshal to concern himself with holding the enemy upon his front and defending Alsace. But when he heard that Eugene was on the march apparently towards the Danube he sent orders in the opposite sense. Villeroy, since Alsace seemed no longer threatened, was to follow Tallard towards Bavaria, secure his communications, and be ready to act if necessary upon the Danube plain. These were good orders; but by the time they reached Villeroy the Marshal thought them out of date. He was convinced that Eugene was still close to the Lines and showed no sign of moving to Bavaria. He had also been directed to send a reinforcement of five thousand men to Bedmar, in Flanders, and felt himself considerably weakened thereby. He therefore remained near Strasburg; and the King, lulled by his assurances, approved.

What greater tribute can be paid to the masterly manœuvres of Eugene? He had fulfilled both his objects. He had deceived Villeroy: he was about to join Marlborough. The King, at the moment when he had the right idea, was persuaded to abandon it; and Villeroy, gaping at the half-vacant Lines of Stollhofen, need no longer be considered as a factor in the fateful decisions impending upon the Danube.

Much foolishness has been written of the sudden surprising

arrival of Eugene to the rescue of Marlborough, and how he appeared in the nick of time where he was most needed. But that all these operations were most closely concerted between the two commanders is evident, not only from the common sense of the matter, but from Marlborough's official correspondence. On July 27 he wrote through Cardonnel a series of letters in which the same information was imparted in different degrees to various high personages with whom he had to keep in touch. The accuracy of his information about the enemy, and also the speed with which it reached him, is remarkable. He knew on the 27th exactly what had happened at Villingen, and where Tallard was baking his bread and would march. He had heard of the King's orders to Villeroy almost as soon as that Marshal. He had known for some time about the Swiss having refused to cross the Rhine; and also about the detachment Villeroy had sent to Bedmar. He derived all this from his own secret service, and confirmed it where necessary from Eugene's field reports. He credited Tallard with three days' more expedition than he actually made. But this was an error on the side of prudence. To Harley he said:

> . . . I am of your opinion, that he [the Elector] will not be brought to terms till the last extremity, and that we could not [ought not to] buy him at too dear a rate; he relies entirely on his succours, which are advancing from the Rhine. . . . M. Tallard after lying six days before Villingen, with four twenty-four pounders and eight sixteen-pounders, had been obliged that day, upon the approach of Prince Eugene, to retire; . . . and was to march the same day [the 22nd] to Tuttlingen on the Danube, where he had sent before to bake bread for his troops, resolving to march with all expedition to join the Elector. If this news be true, of which we are hourly expecting the confirmation, the junction [of Tallard and the Elector] may be made about the 2nd of the next month. We are told that the Maréchal de Villeroy has orders to fall with the troops under his command into the country of Würtemberg, so that the enemy's vast designs on the Rhine are vanished, and the whole war like to be brought on this side. They will have in Alsace only the Swiss that refused to pass, and a few battalions more under the command of M. Coigny. . . . Since the closing my letter we have one from Prince Eugene which confirms the news relating to M. de Tallard.[1]

And to M. Schmettau:

> . . . You will have heard that this general has had a check at Villingen. He has since advanced with all diligence and, as we calculate,

[1] Friedberg, July 27; *Dispatches*, i, 373.

will join the Elector about the 2nd of next month. *Prince Eugene keeps by his side and will be within reach of us about the same time*, so that the war will drag on at the expense of Bavaria which is likely to be for the most part ruined.[1]

And to Secretary Hedges:

> . . . M. Tallard . . . now is marching this way with all the expedition possible, so that he may probably join the Elector about the 2nd of next month. *Prince Eugene is likewise advancing this way, and I hope will be within reach of us about the same time.*[2]

And the bulletin of Marlborough's army, on the 27th:

> As soon as the French retired from Villingen, Prince Eugene went thither and returned the same evening to Rothweil, *from whence he will march on the other side of the Danube as the French advance on this.*[3]

Here we see how all was foreseen, prescribed, and combined between the two Generals. Eugene knew that, whatever might miscarry behind him on the Rhine, or in Würtemberg, he must arrive on the Danube somewhere between Ulm and Donauwörth at the same time that Tallard joined the Elector. Marlborough in all his conduct counted upon him to do this, and his own arrangements made the junction sure and certain.

We are commonly assured that Marlborough and Eugene planned together to send the Margrave out of the way to besiege Ingolstadt while they themselves sought battle upon the Danube. One must beware of trying to find a pattern everywhere among the facts of history. It is only sometimes that design is truly present, and even then there are often many events happening unexpectedly or disjointedly from day to day which are inconsistent with it. It is therefore necessary to set out the facts exactly.

Upon the agreement to besiege Ingolstadt the Margrave wrote to Prince Eugene. He submitted his letter to Marlborough before sending it, and Marlborough wrote his own comments upon it to Prince Eugene without showing them to the Margrave.

Marlborough to Eugene

FRIEDBERG
July 31

Your Highness will see by the Prince of Baden's letter what he feels

[1] "M. le Prince Eugene le cotoye, et sera a portée de nous environ le meme temps de sorte que la guerre va trainer encore aux depens de la Baviere, qui en apparence sera pour la plupart ruinée." (*Ibid.*)

[2] Friedberg, July 27; *Dispatches*, i, 373.

[3] *Ibid.*

about the siege of Ingolstadt, and that he is bent upon making it with the troops we have here without any reinforcements from your side. I have pointed out to him that there is no military reason for keeping so many troops in the Lines [of Stollhofen] or in Würtemberg, because Tallard is here, and Villeroy, having sent off a detachment towards the Low Countries, cannot have a corps of more than twenty thousand men to oppose us from the Rhine [*de ce côté-là*]. On the other hand, when Tallard has joined the Elector and Marsin, they will have at least an army of more than forty thousand men; and when we shall be occupied with the siege they, being between us and their garrisons, will be able to draw [from them] to the very last man, and raise themselves to fifty thousand; whereas, when we have furnished the troops for the siege—which the Prince of Baden believes he can conduct with twenty-three battalions and thirty squadrons, which in my opinion is too little—the enemy will nevertheless have a considerable superiority over our army of observation; and we shall run the risk not only of a setback, but of losing the whole fruit of the campaign. Instead of which if we pushed this siege with vigour, we might still find ourselves able to besiege Ulm. With this object (without however broaching a word to anyone) I have written to Mainz to get ready the twenty pieces of cannon belonging to the States-General which could come in time for that. . . .[1]

Besides this letter Marlborough enclosed a formal memorandum called a *projet* under three heads. The first declared that the Palatine troops were sufficient to defend the lines against Villeroy. The second showed in detail down even to individual battalions how *un petit corps* could be scraped together from various quarters as a reserve to cover Würtemberg. The third paragraph must be stated in full:

> For the siege of Ingolstadt there can march the Prussian corps, the Danes, and the rest of the cavalry now with the army of Prince Eugene, which troops will be reinforced for the siege so that *the grand army will always be in a position to make head against the Elector joined by Tallard.*[2]

Nothing can exceed the precision with which this plan is stated. The bulk of Eugene's troops are to go to the siege of Ingolstadt, strengthened by enough troops from the Marlborough-Margrave army to push the siege with vigour, *provided always that the covering army or "grand army," as Marlborough called it, shall be capable of fighting a battle with the whole combined forces of Marsin, the Elector, and Tallard.*

Marlborough concluded his letter to Eugene with a sentence

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 379.

[2] *Ibid.*, 380.

which shows the contrast between his relations with Eugene and with the Margrave.

> I request Your Highness to look closely into this [*examiner de près*], and if you find yourself in agreement, as I have to be very careful how I handle the Prince of Baden [*comme il est necéssaire que je garde des mesures avec M. le Prince de Bade*], I would beg you to settle it thus, and put it up to him as if it were your own idea [*de prendre le tout sur soi comme ses propres pensées*].

Eugene replied to the Margrave on August 2 from Heidenheim. It is instructive to see how he and Marlborough already worked together. He adopted Marlborough's view in its entirety, and after a lengthy survey of the situation presented it to the Margrave as his own. He declared that the whole of the forces with him could be spared from the Rhine for the rest of the campaign, and he offered to undertake the siege of Ingolstadt himself with them. Hitherto the personal question of command had not been discussed. Prince Louis keenly desired it for himself. He had always favoured the operation. He now felt bound to offer Marlborough the choice whether to conduct the siege or cover it. Marlborough did not immediately announce his decision. For some days the question rested in suspense. Meanwhile Eugene's letter arrived.

The fact that Eugene was himself willing to take the siege was not calculated to lessen the Margrave's desire. With Eugene before Ingolstadt, the Margrave saw himself tied up with Marlborough in the covering army. The joint command had led to unceasing friction and a widening breach. All the time Marlborough, with Wratislaw in his pocket, had dominated or overridden him on every occasion. All he had been able to do was to resist and make trouble, and he must by now have felt that whatever he proposed was treated as suspect, because of his alleged Bavarian sympathies. And here was this prize, the capture of Ingolstadt, the virgin fortress, his own original plan, to which the others had at length come round—was it to be taken from him? But Marlborough had not yet given an answer to his only too courteous offer. There is no doubt that on the night of August 3 the Margrave of Baden desired above all things to conduct the siege of Ingolstadt himself.

Marlborough to Godolphin

FRIEDBERG
August 3rd, 1704

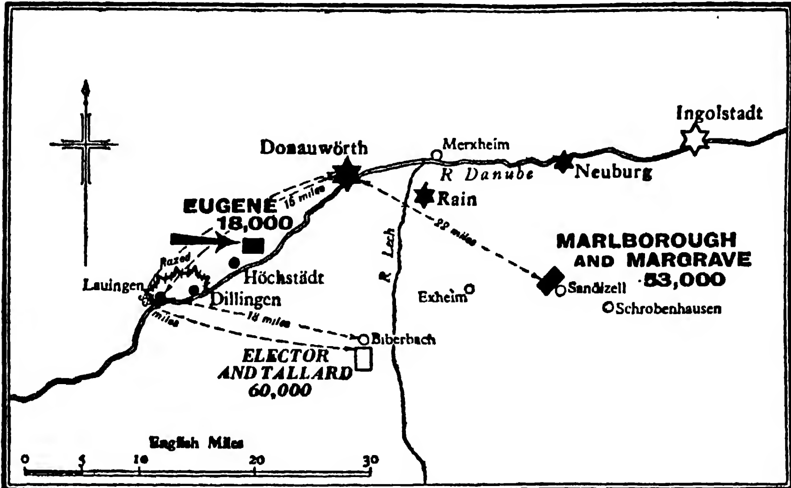
*I find by yours of the 7th [18th N.S.] of the last month you were impatient to know what further steps we had made. If we had had

cannon we should have been a week ago at Munich; for the consternation was so great that we might have done everything if we had wherewithal to act. P. Lewis thinks that he shall have it in his power to have Cannon on the Danube sufficient for the attacking of Ingolstadt. It is the strongest place in this country, which makes me very much apprehend the success; for I am very sure that one-half of what will be promised will not be performed. Complaints can do no good, so that I beg you will let nobody know it, but such as will say nothing of it; for we must do the best we can. If we succeed in this undertaking and can possess ourselves of Ratisbon [Regensburg], the next thing we shall think of is if possible to attack Ulm; in order to which you will see by the copy of my letter to P. Eugene that I have sent for 20 pieces of Cannon which belong to the Dutch. If I should let them know it here, they would be so negligent that they would neglect the getting their own. P. Louis makes me the compliment of my choosing either to make the siege or cover it. I have not yet taken my resolution; but in the next camp I must, for there the troops for the attack must be named. As yet Monsr de Tallard has not joined the Elector and we begin to be afraid that his design is to pass [re-pass] the Danube at Ulm, by which he would give us a great deal more trouble than if he joined the Elector. . . .

Meanwhile, as can now be seen, there was no doubt about what Marlborough's choice would be. Although he kept up appearances even with Godolphin, Wratislaw on August 3 reported to the Emperor, "Marlborough is willing to satisfy the Margrave and let him take command of the siege for fear lest the Margrave should leave him short of the needed supplies." We cannot therefore doubt that when the time comes the Margrave will succeed in gaining his heart's desire, nor that Marlborough will make the sacrifice, when the time comes, out of respect to the first general of the Empire.

Marshal Tallard reached Augsburg on the 5th, and the next day the full concentration of the Franco-Bavarian army was effected at Biberbach. Marlborough moved to Schrobenhausen on the 6th and to Sandizell on the 8th, the bulk of the Margrave's forces lying close by, but rather nearer to Neuburg. The two hostile armies lay about twenty miles apart. Simultaneously the army of Prince Eugene had appeared on the Danube at Höchstädt, in the tower of which, it will be remembered, Marlborough had a post. The confederate position was at this moment thoroughly sound. The enemy could not advance towards Donauwörth or Rain, where all the crossings were fortified against them. Unless they wished to force a battle at a disadvantage, their only offensive movement was against

Eugene beyond the river. By this also they would assail Marlborough's communications through Nördlingen with Nuremberg. There could be little doubt they would take this course. Marlborough and the Margrave could join Eugene in front of Donauwörth in time to meet such a menace with their three armies united. But they would only just have time; for the distance they would



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have to march, from Sandizell to Donauwörth, was twenty-two miles, while that from Biberbach by the bridge of Lauingen to Donauwörth was thirty-three miles. There was only one day's march in favour of the allies. Marlborough—for he was in fact the directing authority—had superior forces, interior lines with well-prepared roads and fortified bridges within them, and satisfactory communications with his advanced base, Nördlingen, and even better *via* Neuburg with his ultimate base, Nuremberg. The enemy would have to march round and see what part of this closely wrought structure they would attack; and all the while they would be courting a battle with perhaps sixty thousand men against more than seventy. So far prudence and advantage rested with the allies.

On the afternoon of the 6th Eugene had arrived at Schrobenhausen. Sergeant Millner saw him as he rode through the camp of the Royal Irish, "attended by only one servant." He was welcomed by Marlborough alone. The Margrave had already started from Neuburg to inspect the siege train and make arrangements for

the siege. That night he wrote to Marlborough that he had found everything ready, and had therefore given orders to invest and isolate Ingolstadt by a cavalry brigade. Marlborough and Eugene had twenty-four hours together, with Wratislaw at hand. The Margrave returned on the evening of the 7th, and the three commanders discussed the situation. They decided that the arrival of Tallard should not deter them from the siege of Ingolstadt. Marlborough then stated he would prefer to serve with the covering army. Before Eugene could speak the Margrave declared that he was ready to conduct the siege, and pointed out that his troops were nearer to the fortress than those of Prince Eugene. The latter therefore remained silent, and the Margrave had his wish. After the battle Prince Louis viewed the story in a different light; but he had surely no ground for complaint. His was the decision, and that it was agreeable to the two superior minds with whom he was working is not a fact for which they can be reproached.

Early on the 7th Marlborough and Eugene with a large escort rode forth to examine for themselves all the country between them and the enemy. A battle might be fought here, and they must know the ground thoroughly. They did not return till nightfall. On the 8th they moved to Sandizell. On the 9th Prince Louis's besieging force of 20 battalions and 15 squadrons, or fifteen thousand men, most of whom were camped along the Neuburg road, marched across the river towards Ingolstadt. Eugene returned to his command at Höchstädt, and Marlborough set the main force on a short march to Exheim, five miles nearer to Donauwörth and his military triangle. He had not gone far when news arrived that the whole Franco-Bavarian army was in motion towards the Danube at Lauingen. A similar report met Eugene just as he had got through Donauwörth. He immediately turned his horse and rode back to Marlborough at Exheim.

Now comes the surprising event. Marlborough, with Eugene's agreement, allowed the Margrave to continue his march to besiege Ingolstadt twenty miles in the rear. He thus discarded his numerical superiority. He left himself with only thirty-eight thousand men (who could, indeed, join or be joined by the eighteen thousand under Prince Eugene on either side of the Danube before a battle) but opposite to more than sixty thousand Franco-Bavarians. The chronicles of disaster no doubt afford innumerable precedents, but we know of no similar defiance of the sound principle of gathering all forces together for a battle by any of the successful captains of

history. We have therefore a new situation deliberately created by Marlborough and Eugene in which the odds in numbers were turned against themselves. They could certainly unite, but when united they would have to fight with about five men to six and barely half as many guns. Judging in the after-light, we may admire the confidence of these masters of war in themselves and in their soldiers.

That they had by now—and probably at this moment—resolved to attack the enemy and fight a battle on which the whole result of the war would be staked is suggested by a curious incident. The Emperor Leopold had been from the beginning of the month grievously depressed. Suddenly on the night of the 12th, which was the earliest a swift courier from Exheim could have reached him, he sent for the Bishop of Vienna, and directed him the next morning to begin a solemn Triduum, or three days' invocation of divine protection for the armies of the Holy Roman Empire. Such ceremonies were not unusual in these troublous times, but the court and the capital were puzzled because no special object was assigned for their prayers. During the 13th, 14th, and 15th of August there were intercessions of a general character. The Emperor was several times heard to say, "In these three days the fate of the House of Austria will be decided." No one knew what he meant until nearly a week later. Then his words were on every lip, and many avowed he had received a divine premonition. The English Ambassador was sceptical. In his dispatch of August 20 he wrote, "I am not so superstitious as to believe that the pious emperor possesses the gift of divination, and yet I do recall it as remarkable that August 13, the day of the victory, was also the first day of the Triduum."[1] He evidently suspected—and we may share his view—that the two generals had sent word through Wratislaw that they meant to put everything to the test, and had even specified the 13th, 14th, and 15th as the days within which they would make their attack upon the enemy.

Yet even now they did not attempt to recall the Margrave. It would still have been possible for his troops to have marched back from Neuburg to join them between Donauwörth and Höchstädt on the afternoon of the 12th; and his cavalry could have arrived there that morning. On the contrary, we find Marlborough sending him ten more squadrons, or fifteen hundred horse, to put him at his ease. He and Eugene must have felt very sure of their own skill and comradeship and of the quality of their troops. Their decision was

[1] Stepney's dispatch, August 20; Klopp, xi, 184.

scarcely complimentary to the Margrave. His military epitaph for all time must be that the two greatest captains of the age, pre-eminent and renowned in all the annals of war, rated, by actions more expressive than words, his absence from a decisive battlefield well worth fifteen thousand men. And this before a Europe whose military society, evolved by twenty years of war, measured all the facts and values with professional eye. No wonder Prince Louis never forgave them!

Once the Margrave had departed, Marlborough's problem became intricate, and as critical as an actual battle. He now had two vital objects to safeguard: he must be able to cover the Margrave and the siege of Ingolstadt, and to pass the Danube and join Eugene in time. Which of these tasks would predominate depended upon the movements of the enemy. Even now the situation was not clear. Marlborough could not move with his whole force to join Eugene's army until he was sure Tallard and the Elector had definitely committed themselves to passing the river. Their march might be a feint, and meanwhile he must preserve the power to cover the Margrave. We have his letter from Exheim on August 9 to the Margrave, which lucidly explains the position.

> I have received sure news to-day upon the march which the whole enemy army made this morning towards Lauingen. Prince Eugene, who had left me, came back this afternoon to confirm this, and has since left to rejoin his command. On this news we have ordered twenty-seven Imperial squadrons to march to-morrow before daybreak [*de grand matin*] to join him, as I shall do at the same time with the whole army to put my right on our bridges over the Danube and to pass this river if the enemies pass it with all their army.[1]

His concern is to reassure the Margrave that he will not be exposed.

> In this case Prince Eugene will send forthwith a reinforcement to Your Highness of ten Imperial squadrons. I will take care moreover to stand myself always between the enemy and the siege of Ingolstadt and to detach troops [for your protection] in the same proportion that they can.
>
> We have also information that the whole garrison of Munich or the bulk of it marched last Friday from the direction of Augsburg. I will not fail to let Your Highness know all I can learn.[2]

In the midst of this tense crisis, which he was measuring and

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 387.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

controlling from hour to hour, we find Marlborough with time to write one of his periodical series of letters to his Cabinet colleagues and to the States-General, dealing on this occasion mainly with the financial contribution which the Dutch should make to the cost of the expedition to Portugal and with the command in that country. All this, apart from his orders to the troops, was written while the uncertainties and crisis of the 10th were at their height, and may be read at length in Murray's *Letters and Dispatches*. Thus we see him measuring accurately and functioning with cool routine, while resolved upon moving towards an event which, if it miscarried, would be fatal not only to himself and his army, but to the whole cause of the allies, for the sake of which the risks were run. But thereafter Cardonnel's office shut down. When it reopened four days later the destiny of Europe and its leading nations had been settled for nearly a hundred years.

The sun was setting on Marlborough's camp at Rain when an officer galloped in with a decisive letter from Prince Eugene.

CAMP OF MUNSTER, *two hours from Donauwörth*
August 10. 1704

*MONSIEUR,

The enemy have marched. It is almost certain that the whole army is passing the Danube at Lauingen. They have pushed a Lieutenant-Colonel whom I sent to reconnoitre back to Höchstädt. The plain of Dillingen is crowded with troops. I have held on all day here; but with eighteen battalions I dare not risk staying the night. I quit however with much regret, [the position] being good and if he [the enemy] takes it, it will cost us much to get it back.

I am therefore marching the infantry and part of the cavalry this night to a camp I have had marked out before Donauwörth. I shall stay here as long as I can with the cavalry which arrived to-day from Your Excellency's camp and my own dragoons. As soon as the head of your infantry comes up, I will advance again with mine, if the enemies have not occupied the position.

Everything, milord, consists in speed [*diligence*] and that you put yourself forthwith in movement to join me to-morrow, without which I fear it will be too late. In short, all the army is there. They have left at least twelve battalions at Augsburg under Caraman. . .

While I was writing sure news has reached me that the whole army has crossed. Thus there is not a moment to lose and I think you might risk making the march by the Lech and the Danube. That will shorten it a good deal, and the road is better. I await your answer, milord, to

make my dispositions. It is above all important not to be shut in [? cramped] between these mountains and the Danube.[1]

This vibrant letter, hitherto unknown, and especially its last sentence, are revealing. After the open plains of Höchstädt and Blenheim are passed the hills draw in towards the river, and there is no battle-ground suitable for a main trial of strength until after Donauwörth and even Neuburg have been passed. Hence the desire of Eugene not to retreat beyond the Münster position, and that the concentration point of the army should be as far up-stream as possible. This shows that the decision to fight a battle had already been taken by the two commanders, and that this was recognized between them as their main purpose.

Much praise has been bestowed upon the smoothness and celerity of the concentration which followed. But the diagram shows how conveniently the divisions of Marlborough's army lay at the moment when the sudden but expected call came, and how short were the distances. Part of his cavalry had already joined Eugene. His brother Churchill, who had crossed the pontoon bridge at Merxheim in the morning, was seven miles from Donauwörth, where Eugene's infantry had spent the night. Marlborough himself, taking the short cut across the Lech to Donauwörth, as Prince Eugene recommended, was equally close. Starting at midnight on the 10th, they could both be at Donauwörth during the next morning by marches of only seven miles. A further four miles would bring the combined army into the line behind the Kessel stream. Knowing that Churchill and Marlborough were on the march and

[1]★"Monsieur. Les ennemis ont marché. Il ny at presque pas a douter que toute l'armée ne passe le Danube a Lauingen. Ils ont poussé un lieutenant collonel que j'avois envoyé pour reconnoistre, jusqua Hochstetten. La plaine de Tillingen est remplie de monde. J'ay tenu tout le jour ici, mais avec 18 bataillons je n'oserois hazarder de rester cette nuit ici. Je quite cependant avec beaucoup de regret, estant bon et s'il le prenne nous aurons beaucoup de peine a le reprendre. Je fais donc marcher cette nuite l'infanterie a un camp que jay fais marquer aupres Donavert et une partie de la cavallerie. Je resteré ici aussi longtemp que je pourré avec la cavallerie qui est arrivée aujourdhui du camp de V.E. et les dragons que j'ay avec moy. Dabord que la teste de Vostre infanterie arriverat je feré ravancer la mienne si les ennemis nont pas occupé le poste. Le tout milord consiste en la diligence et que vous vous mettiez dabord en mouvement pour me joindre demain, sans cela je crains qu'il sera trop tard. Du reste toute l'armée y est. Les ennemis ont laissé aumoins 12 bataillons a Ausbourg avec Chamarante lieutenant. Pendant que j'ecris jay nouvelle sure que toute l'armée est passée. Ainsi il ny at pas un moment de temp a perdre, et je crois quon pourroit hazarder de faire la marche en passant le Lek et le Danube cela la raccourcit beaucoup et le chemin est meilleur. J'attens une reponse milord pour me regler, il depend du tout de ne se pas laisser enfermer entre ces montagnes et le Danube."

This reinforcement [Eugene's army] makes it necessary for M. Tallard to press to the utmost his Electoral Highness to recall some of his troops who are in Bavaria to make this army equal in number to the enemy, and even if possible stronger, so that we can go where we like. The Elector has 35 good battalions and 43 squadrons of good troops, of which since the entry of the enemy into Bavaria he has had 23 squadrons and 5 battalions with the army, the rest being spread about in his properties in small bodies, which produced no effective result, and which would be much more useful for the service of the King and of the Elector in reinforcing the army. Love for his country has induced him to take this course, though he has done his country no good thereby.[1]

The ravaging of Bavaria had plainly produced important military results.

The Elector was conscious of these reproaches. He promised to recall his troops as soon as the enemy evacuated the country. He ordered forthwith four battalions and four squadrons to join him from Munich. Apart from this the three enemy chiefs were satisfied that they had the whip-hand of the confederates. They took it for granted that Marlborough's retreat from Friedberg was the first stage in a general withdrawal from Bavaria. At no time, till they had ceased to count at all, did they contemplate even an allied siege of Ingolstadt or know about it. The conviction that once Tallard had arrived the allies would retire upon their communications by Nördlingen towards Nuremberg obsessed their minds. The only question was how best they could inflict punishment upon them. Thus Tallard to the King on August 5:

From the heights of Biberbach we shall see what the enemy will do and regulate our own movements accordingly until the thirteen battalions and sixteen squadrons with which the Elector has undertaken to strengthen his army have enabled us to grip the enemy tighter, and then we shall not let him get off cheaply [*et ne les point marchander*].[2]

They agreed to march on the 9th to Lauingen, cross the Danube there, and await in a strong camp the arrival of the Bavarian reinforcements. Meanwhile they would threaten Marlborough's communications at Nördlingen and oblige him to quit Bavaria.

On the night of the 9th they slept at Lauingen by the banks of the river. On the 10th they crossed to the northern bank. It would have suited their plan to rest in the Elector's old entrenched camp

[1] Marsin to Chamillart, August 8; Pelet, iv, 550.

[2] Pelet, iv, 548.

of Lauingen-Dillingen. But they found all the fortifications levelled. Feeling themselves decidedly the stronger, they were in no mood to begin digging them up again. They therefore moved forward to Höchstädt on the 11th. During this day they learned that Marlborough was joining Eugene. They did not know whether the Margrave was with them both or not. The initiative, they conceived, rested with themselves. The allies would naturally retreat upon Nördlingen and along their communications. The only question open was whether they could not maul Eugene's rearguard as he and Marlborough withdrew into the hills. Upon this there was considerable debate. The Elector, nominally the commander of the army in which he had hardly any troops of his own, was all for the offensive. He called for an immediate advance along the river towards Donauwörth. Tallard resisted. He judged rightly that time was upon their side. The Bavarian reinforcements would come in. Soon Marlborough would have to go home. The King's interests would best be served by their entrenching themselves where they were. If only the lines of Lauingen-Dillingen had not been destroyed, this is probably what they would have done. Feeling ran high at headquarters. Tallard even said to the Elector who mocked at his caution, "If I were not so convinced of Your Highness's integrity, I should imagine that you wished to gamble with the King's forces *without having any of your own*, to see at no risk what would happen."[1] On this unkind presentation of the facts the Elector subsided. The French officers around Marsin who agreed with him muttered, however, that if the allied armies occupied Höchstädt without a battle "*in a week there would be fifty letters written to Versailles.*"

It was decided as a compromise to move three miles farther forward to the open ground in front of Höchstädt. On the 11th and the next morning they captured the small posts of eighty and a hundred men respectively which the allies held in the towers of Dillingen and Höchstädt. They marched into their new camp on the morning of the 12th. It never entered into their minds that they might be attacked themselves. In this warfare of marches and counter-marches battles were so rare that if reasonable precautions were taken, and the military movements were correct, they might almost be ruled out. They had been so long accustomed to the war of manœuvre and of engagements with limited risks that the idea of a ferocious death-grapple, where the destruction of the whole

[1] Tallard to Chamillart, September 4; Pelet, iv, 564.

of one side or the other was at stake, did not present itself. For three years a world war had raged without any decisive battle having been fought. That the armies before which they were grimacing in the orthodox fashion would suddenly fall upon them and try to kill them all or perish in the attempt, seemed as unlikely as that a chess-player should knock over the board and seize his opponent by the throat. These experienced generals in no way contemplated such violent behaviour. They therefore passed the 12th in great composure. They lay behind a marshy stream. Their front was covered by a line of loop-holed and defended villages. Their right lay upon the Danube; their left upon the wooded mountains. They felt safe and comfortable, and when Tallard proposed to build a few redoubts, the Elector begged him not to break the soil.

On the morning of the 12th, as they were moving into their laid-out camp behind the Nebel stream, they could plainly see the enemy six miles away in considerable numbers at the mouth of the gorge between the hills and the river. And they were struck by the fact that, instead of a retirement while time remained, a broad expanse of tents began to spring up at the beginning of the plain. Evidently the allies were not in a hurry. What did this mean? Was it not a fine opportunity to fall with their whole army upon a portion of the other? Opinions were again divided, but prudence prevailed. Before attacking they must know whether the Margrave was with Eugene and Marlborough or not. So a reconnaissance of forty squadrons under the Marquis de Silly went forward to probe the enemy and take some prisoners. The reconnaissance soon found itself opposed by equally large numbers of the enemy's cavalry, and at one point not far from the river they came upon a number of pioneers apparently engaged in making approaches across a swampy water-course. This odd fact did not disturb their preconceived opinions.

But they caught four prisoners or deserters, who were subjected separately to sharp examination. Each of these men told the same tale. They one and all declared that the Margrave and his troops had arrived. And secondly that the whole allied army was going to move off towards Nördlingen the next morning. This intelligence seemed to be confirmed in the first part by the reports of the French cavalry scouts who had watched the dust clouds above Marlborough's baggage column marching the day before from Rain to Donauwörth, and in the second part by the rumours which came in from the countryside. Thus the two Marshals and the Elector were

all in the end agreed, first that they should not attack so strong an army, and secondly that it was naturally responding as might be expected to the strategic compulsion of their move. Of course these prisoners or deserters had been 'planted' upon them in order to deter them from making any attack on the 12th, which would have deranged the deployment of the allied offensive on the 13th.

During this day Marlborough and Eugene from the church tower of Tapfheim had gazed long and intently at the French camp, and both had ridden out with their cavalry to drive back the French reconnaissance. With pride and pleasure they rejoiced in each other's companionship and in their conviction that the whole war must be put to the test at dawn. But in the French and Bavarian camp no one expected anything of importance to occur on the morrow, and generals and soldiers went untroubled to their rest.

The Count of Mérode Westerloo, a Flemish officer of distinction who commanded a Belgian contingent in the service of Spain forming part of Marshal Tallard's army, has left us sprightly memoirs of this and other campaigns. He dined that night in Blenheim village with the generals and colonels of his division. Never was he in better spirits than when, having eaten and drunk excellently, he returned to his quarters. These were in a grange which overlooked the Nebel. His retinue had carpeted the floor and set up his bed. "Never I believe have I slept a sleep more sound and tranquil than this night."[1] He was still sleeping profoundly at six o'clock in the morning when his trusty valet, all out of breath, entered the barn. "Milord, the enemy are there!" "Where," said the count, mocking him; "there?" "Yes, there, there," reiterated the servant, and, throwing open the door of the barn and the curtains of his master's bed, he revealed a brilliant and astounding spectacle. The wide plain, bathed in the morning sunlight, was covered with hostile squadrons and battalions, already close at hand and steadily marching on. But behind this magnificent array, if the count could have discerned them, were the shapes of great causes and the destinies of many powerful nations. Europe protested against the military domination of a single Power. The Holy Roman Empire pleaded for another century of life. The ancient rights of the Papacy against Gallicanism and the ascendancy of a Universal over a National church —despite the mistaken partisanship of the reigning Pope—were, in fact, fatefully at stake. The Dutch Republic sought to preserve its

[1] Mérode Westerloo, *Mémoires*, p. 298.

independence, and Prussia its kingdom rank. And from across the seas in England the Protestant succession, Parliamentary government, and the future of the British Empire advanced with confident tread. All these had brought their cases before the dread tribunal now set up in this Danube plain.

Chapter Twenty

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

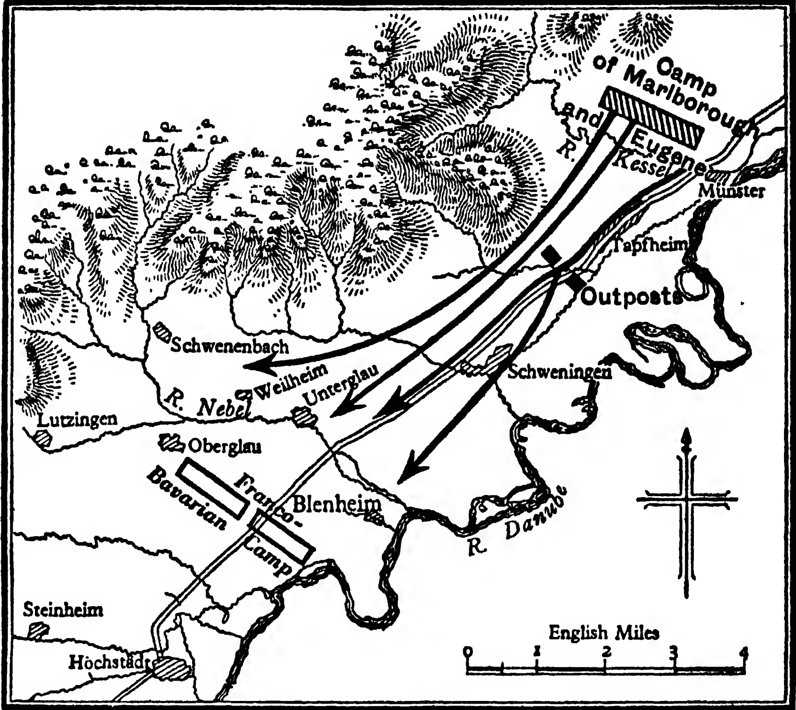
1704—AUGUST 13

MARLBOROUGH had spent some of the night in prayer. He received the sacrament from Dr Hare. "The religion he had learned as a boy" fortified his resolution and sealed his calm. While the advance guards were moving into the night he visited Prince Eugene, whom he found writing letters. They mounted their horses. It is said by several authorities that on being in the saddle he declared, "This day I conquer or die." Nothing was more unlike him. Months before in England he had used such words to Wratislaw, and assuredly they did not go beyond the truth. But, arrived at the point of action, it is more probable that he made some considerate inquiry about his horse's forage or his man's rations.

The army filed off at three o'clock in eight columns, preceded by 40 squadrons, along tracks which had been carefully marked and prepared, through darkness intensified by the gathering mists of dawn. As day broke they crossed the watercourse by Tapfheim, and here the advance guards were merged in their respective columns. Here also a ninth column was formed close to the river. It comprised all the troops of the outpost line, and included the two English brigades of Rowe and Ferguson, in all 20 battalions and 15 squadrons. Of this powerful body Lord Cutts took command. The artillery and the pontoons marched by the main road with the Duke's six-horse coach at their tail. The whole force numbered 66 battalions, 160 squadrons, and 66 guns, or about fifty-six thousand men. Daylight came, but at first the sun only drew more vapours from the marshes and shrouded densely the crawling masses. Thus the heads of the columns arrived in line with Schwenningen village, scarcely two miles from the enemy's camp, about six.

Here Marlborough and Eugene remained together for some time in company with the Prussian Major-General Natzmer, who had fought at Höchstädt in the previous year. The plan of the two commanders was that Eugene should attack and hold the enemy's

left wing while Marlborough overwhelmed his right. If Marlborough succeeded he carried forward Eugene's battle with him. The more decisively Eugene could attack, the greater the chances of Marlborough's success. If both allied wings were defeated, retreat would be difficult, especially for Eugene, most of whose troops could



THE ADVANCE TO BLENHEIM

only have fallen back into trackless wooded heights. On the other hand, the advance of Marlborough along the Danube and towards Höchstädt would not only conquer the enemy in his own front, but would threaten the retreat of the whole of the French opposite Eugene.

The mists began to thin as the sun rose higher, and the enemy outposts became aware of large numbers of men gathering along their front. They sent back speedy warnings, and at the same time the mists dispersing revealed from the French camp large forces covering the whole space from the Danube to the hills. Even now the Marshal and the Elector held to their prepossession that the confederate army was retiring under a bold display through the

shallow valley which led back to Nördlingen. Tallard had finished a letter to the King, but before dispatching it he added the following postscript:

> This morning before daybreak the enemy beat the *générale* at 2 o'clock and at three the *assemblée*. They are now drawn up at the head of their camp, and it looks as if they will march this day. Rumour in the countryside expects them at Nördlingen. If that be true, they will leave us between the Danube and themselves and in consequence they will have difficulty in sustaining the posts and depots which they have taken in Bavaria.[1]

Incredible as it may seem, the Marshal penned these words about seven o'clock or even a few minutes afterwards, *and sent off the messenger*. We see that the possibility of the allies forcing a battle did not even enter his mind. This also gives us the measure of the audacity of Marlborough and Eugene in relation to the military conventions of the period as understood by the French High Command.

However, the columns still moved forward, and when, shortly after seven, they began to deploy into a long wall of blue, red, and buff, gleaming with steel, the truth broke suddenly upon the French and Bavarians. They were about to be attacked! There was no time to retire, even if they wished to do so, without abandoning their camp and baggage. They must now prepare to fight for life and honours. This sudden revolution of ideas had an effect not only upon the commanders, but upon their troops. It was a moral surprise. Count Westerloo, who had mustered and mounted his own squadrons upon his first sight of the enemy, had been perturbed at the unbroken silence of the French headquarters. But now Tallard came hurrying along, thanked him for his promptitude, and ordered him to tell the artillery to fire the signal guns to recall the foragers, and meanwhile to sound the alarm incessantly.[2] The camps sprang into activity. Aides and messengers galloped to and fro, the soldiers hustled out of their tents, formed in their companies, battalions, and brigades, and moved forward to their appointed places in the order of battle.

[1] "Ce 13, au point du jour les ennemis ont battu la générale à 2 heures, à 3 l'assemblée. On les voit en bataille à la tête de leur camp, et suivant les apparences ils marcheront aujourd'hui. Le bruit du pays est qu'ils vont à Nördlingen. Si cela est, ils nous laisseront entre le Danube et eux, et par conséquent ils auront de la peine à soutenir les établissements qu'ils ont pris en Bavière." (Marshal Tallard to the King, dated Leitzeim, August 12, 1704; *Campagne de monsieur le maréchal de Tallard en Allemagne 1704* (Amsterdam, 1763), ii, 140.)

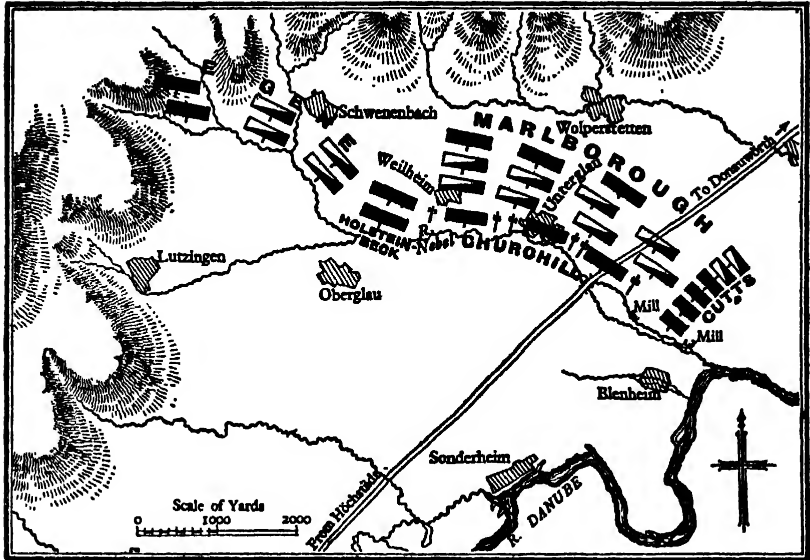
[2] Mérode Westerloo, p. 300.

This had, of course, subject to the final dispositions of the commanders, already been prescribed. The allied army, whose formation developed and broadened continually, was soon within cannon-shot, and at half-past eight the powerful French artillery which covered their front opened fire upon them. The English field batteries began to reply as they came into range, and the cannonade became general. Its thunders rolled down the Danube Valley. The Margrave, forty miles away in his camp before Ingolstadt, was writing to the Emperor. His officers drew his attention to the distant thudding which loaded the air, and he inserted in his letter the words, "The Prince and the Duke are engaged to-day to the westward. Heaven bless them."

The French position had been selected for its military advantages. Its flanks rested securely on the Danube and the wooded hills. Its four-mile front was shielded by the rivulets of the Nebel. In those days, when populations were small and only the best soil cultivated, drainage was rare; and a strip of soft or marshy ground, in places a treacherous quag, profuse in rushes and marigolds, laced by streamlets from four to twelve feet broad, carried the springs and rainfall from a wide bay of hills to the river. A spell of dry weather had reduced this obstacle, still however serious to the soldiers of 1704. Along it were three considerable villages. On the French right, a furlong of water-meadows from the Danube, stood Blenheim (locally Blindheim), about three hundred houses, many of stone, with the usual South German gardens and enclosures, clustered round a solid church and stone-walled graveyard. Two miles or more away in the centre rose the roofs and church-tower of Oberglau, and a mile and a half beyond, nestling under the hills, the spire of Lutzingen. Here were three strong points on which to hang the front. From the marshes of the Nebel the ground rose almost imperceptibly but steadily in about a mile to a grassy upland, upon which the four or five thousand French and Bavarian tents were spread in well-drawn rows. On the allies' side the slopes were slightly more pronounced; and here the villages of Weilheim and Unterglau with several smaller hamlets had served as the French outpost line. These had already been set on fire by the retiring pickets and were burning briskly.

Tallard, Marsin, and the Elector met in Blenheim at about nine o'clock to concert their plans of defence. They were somewhat staggered by the stern aggression of which they saw themselves the objects. They assumed that the Margrave had joined the allied

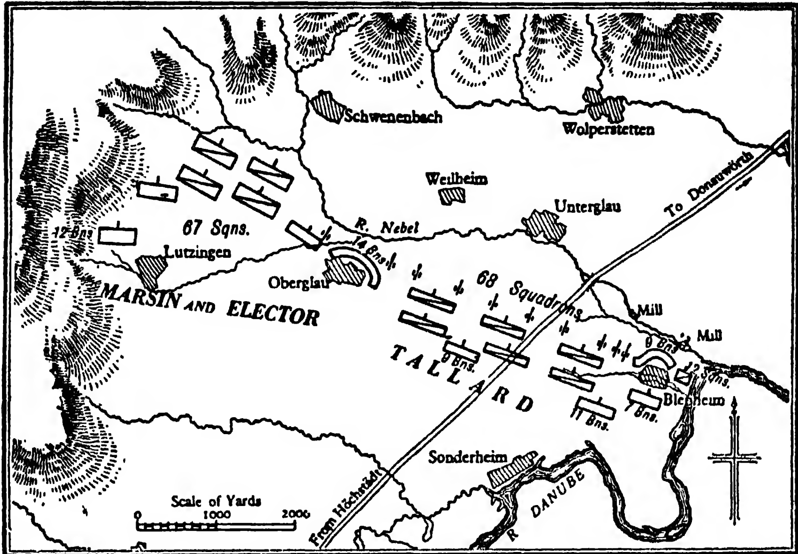
army, and that they were to be assaulted by superior forces. But they were not ill-content with their position, and they had time to occupy it advisedly. Tallard's army had been kept distinct from the rest on account of his independent command, and also because glanders or some other disease was rife among his horses. The generals climbed up the church-tower, whence the whole scene



ALLIED DISPOSITIONS

was revealed. From this modest height it appeared as a large, flat plain, framed by the mountains and the river. The cannon were firing busily on both sides, and between the bulges of dense white smoke which sprang into being and drifted towards them, and the dark clouds which arose from the conflagrations, long columns of the enemy were seen slowly making their way through the scrub of the foothills towards the head of the valley opposite Lutzingen. Not far away, before Blenheim, four heavy lines of infantry, among which the English redcoats predominated, and two of cavalry were deployed. In the centre, opposite the long, too long, space between Blenheim and Oberglau, the main force of the allies was drawn up in four dense lines. Their arrangement was unusual—indeed, entirely novel. The first line was of foot, the next two lines of horse three or four deep, and in the rear another line of foot. The experience of many years of warfare questioned such dispositions.

It was settled that the Elector and Marsin should hold the front from the hills to Oberglau, and that Tallard, strengthened by thirty squadrons of Marsin's cavalry, should defend the ground between Oberglau and Blenheim, and above all should guard the right flank at Blenheim, including the short gap between Blenheim and the Danube. In fact the stations of the troops and the camps from which



FRENCH DISPOSITIONS

they had been mustered broadly conformed to these dispositions. But a difference is said to have arisen upon the method of meeting the impending attack across the Nebel. Marsin and the Elector were for holding the firm ground close to their edge of the marsh, so as to destroy the enemy before they could form in ranks after wading or filing across. Tallard was more ambitious. On his front he would allow at least a considerable part of them to cross. Within well-judged limits the more that crossed the fewer would escape; for then the masses which he would place in Blenheim and the strong force in Oberglau would sally out upon their flanks and rear, while he charged upon them down the smooth glacis between these invincible pillars. If Marlborough persisted in so hazardous an attack it would be no mere drawn battle. He would take him in a trap. The Elector, on whom all he had heard about the Schellenberg had made a deep impression, uttered a warning. "Beware

of these troops. They are very dangerous: you cannot afford to concede anything." "Well, then," said Tallard, "I see that to-day the victory will be my own." On this they descended the tower and galloped to their posts.

The distribution of the troops can be seen upon the plan; but, in short, Tallard placed 12 dismounted squadrons of dragoons, whose horses had died of disease, behind a barrier of carts from the Danube to Blenheim. He assigned 9 battalions to the defence of the perimeter of Blenheim, with another 7 immediately behind them and 11 more battalions a few hundred yards back in reserve. He drew up 68 squadrons, supported by 9 battalions of infantry, a thousand yards from the Nebel on the open ground between Blenheim and Oberglau, and he sent his two remaining battalions to join twelve of Marsin's command in Oberglau. Marsin and the Elector arrayed the remainder of the French and all the Bavarian cavalry from Oberglau towards Lutzingen; and massed their infantry on either flank, posting Count d'Arco with 12 Bavarian battalions in front of Lutzingen with their flank resting 'refused' upon the hills. In all they marshalled 84 battalions, 147 squadrons, and 90 cannon, or about sixty thousand fighting men, against the allies' 66 battalions, 160 squadrons, and 66 cannon, or fifty-six thousand men.

Prince Eugene, with the troops he had brought from the Rhine and the cavalry which had joined him three weeks before at Rothweil, was meanwhile toiling through the rough and broken country in front of the Elector and Marsin. His progress was slow, and all the time he was harassed by the enemy's artillery, to which his own cannon, being still on the march, could for some time make no reply. Lord Cutts' column, the ninth, had now deployed by the river against Blenheim. At ten o'clock his leading British brigade,[1] having expelled the enemy from two water-mills upon the Nebel, crossed the marsh and lay within a hundred and fifty yards of the outskirts of the village. Here they endured for the next three hours with fortitude the severe fire of a heavy six-gun battery posted on a small eminence near Blenheim and to their right. The rest of Marlborough's army sat or lay in their ranks on the forward slope, the horse dismounted, and they too endured the cannonade of an

[1] Rowe's Brigade:

Howe's	15th Foot: the East Yorkshire Regiment
Ingoldsby's	23rd Foot: the Royal Welch Fusiliers
Marlborough's	24th Foot: the South Wales Borderers
Rowe's	21st Foot: the Royal Scots Fusiliers
North and Grey's	10th Foot: the Lincolnshire Regiment.

artillery nearly twice as strong as their own. Marlborough's pioneers and working-parties, protected by infantry from the first line, repaired a stone bridge across the Nebel, and with the planks of the pontoons and seven hundred fascines which had been cut by the rear line of cavalry, constructed five additional bridges or causeways across the marsh between Blenheim and Oberglau. The artillery fire caused serious losses in both armies, but by far the heavier to the allies. An officer who accompanied the French artillery commander, M. de Frézelière, upon his rounds wrote, "We were excited by the extraordinary effects produced by our fire, each discharge piercing their battalions, and some slant-ways; and from the very order in which the enemy were posted, every shot told."[1] The cannon-balls struck, bounded, and shore their way through the lines of men and horses on the plain, and caused nearly two thousand casualties before the attack could even be begun. Divine service was held at the head of every regiment, and the prayers and psalms rose to a grim accompaniment of crashes and cries of pain. But no unwounded man stirred from his place. The pioneers were a special target; but the bridges grew steadily.

The services being ended, the waiting soldiers, unsheltered from the fire, ate their midday meal. Marlborough, resplendent in scarlet, wearing his Garter ribbon and riding his white horse, paced slowly in front of his harassed lines. A roundshot, striking at his horse's feet, enveloped him in a cloud of earth, and wrung an anxious gasp from the watching troops he had led so far from home. But he continued his progress uninjured. He had found the time to choose the sites for the field hospitals, such as they were, and had posted every battery himself. He spent the dragging hours in watching their shooting or conversing with the commanding officers. After a while he dismounted and lunched with his attendants, probably on the rising ground behind Unterglau village. In these conditions, where every man's bearing could be so closely scrutinized, he seemed entirely free from care; yet a grave anxiety was growing in his heart. What had happened to Eugene? He should have been in position by eleven. It was now nearly noon. Messengers had gone and returned with vague reports. The columns were struggling on as fast as they could. At length he sent Cadogan to find the Prince, and to see for himself. Cadogan returned shortly after twelve with the news that Eugene was nearly ready. All the bridges were now finished, and so far the enemy opposite Marlborough

[1] Baron de Quincy to Chamillart, September 18, 1704; Pelet, iv, 576.

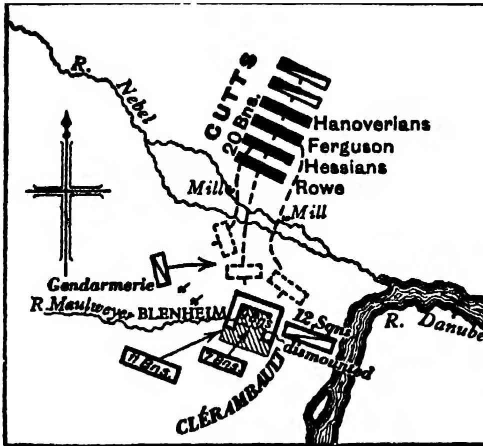
showed no mind to dispute the passage. But the day was wasting. Each minute now acquired a value. At last an aide-de-camp arrived at a gallop. "His Highness will give the signal for attack at half-past twelve." Marlborough rose, called for his horse, and mounted saying to the group of officers, "Gentlemen, to your posts." All the troops stood up and dressed their ranks. The infantry fixed their bayonets, and Cutts launched his attack upon Blenheim. At the same time the first line of General Churchill's infantry began slowly to move towards the Nebel.

High and proud was the bearing of these regular soldiers as they strode into battle. "All," says Hare, "advancing cheerfully showed a firm and glad countenance and seeming to be confident to themselves of a victorious day."[1] Among those who now advanced was Captain Blackadder, and as he gazed upon the mass and pomp of the enemy covering the whole plain before him his heart was so filled with a sense of the infinite mercy and power of God that he could not help exclaiming aloud to his company, "How easy it would be for the Lord to slay or take captive all those thousands before nightfall!" whereat his men, seeing their commander thus transported, were mightily heartened. "And moreover," adds the Captain, in proof of the efficacy of faith and prayer, "before night it was even so."

The British brigade of five battalions which had been sheltering as much as possible in the stream-bed from the artillery now rose up and marched upon the palisades and enclosures of Blenheim. Their brigadier, General Rowe, had ordered that there should be no firing till he struck his sword upon the pales. The distance was perhaps a hundred and fifty yards, and almost immediately, owing to the ground, the troops passed out of the fire of the hostile battery. They marched in silence and perfect order to within thirty yards of the defences. Then the French fired a deadly volley, and General Rowe, who was still unscathed, struck the palisade with his sword; whereupon the survivors of the leading companies fired in their turn, and came to grips with the French through the palisades and across the obstacles which they tried by main force to tear to pieces. Their efforts were vain. Although here and there small parties penetrated, the French, who so greatly outnumbered their assailants, repulsed the attack, inflicting a loss of one man in three. Here fell General Rowe mortally wounded, and both his staff officers were killed in trying to carry him away. As the assault recoiled in

[1] Hare's Journal.

disorder three squadrons of the celebrated French Gendarmerie, also clothed in red, charged round the outskirts of the village and fell upon their flank. Rowe's own regiment[1] lost its colours. The Gendarmes, pressing on, encountered the Hessian brigade at the edge of the marsh, but these good troops by a well-directed fire routed them in their turn and rescued and restored the colours of the 21st.



ATTACK ON BLENHEIM VILLAGE

Lord Cutts now extended his line to the left with Ferguson's English brigade, and with Rowe's brigade, which had re-formed, and the Hessians who still covered the right, delivered a second and even more costly attack. Here the troops broke at various points into the enclosures and pressed the defenders back upon the actual fronts of the houses and the barricades across the streets. More than this they could not win. M. de Clérambault, who commanded all the troops in Blenheim, was so deeply impressed with the weight and fierceness of the attack that he had quite early drawn into the village the seven supporting battalions, and under the pressure of this renewed and more serious onslaught he summoned also the eleven battalions which Tallard had posted as the reserve of his right flank. Thus there were crowded into Blenheim no fewer than twenty-seven battalions, together with the four regiments of horseless dragoons who held the ground between the village and the river. As these excessive reinforcements arrived when the French in the village were already being forced to contract their front line a disastrous congestion resulted. Nearly twelve thousand men were crammed into Blenheim, so closely packed that the bulk could neither move nor use their arms. All the ground before the village was heaped with nearly two thousand dead and wounded, including many hundreds of the British. Lord Cutts had still an intact Hanoverian brigade, and was preparing himself to lead the

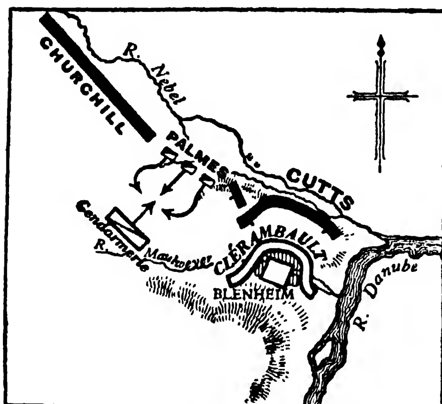
[1] Now the 21st Foot, the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

third attack when, about half-past two, Marlborough, who was watching the struggle at some distance, sent him orders to desist, and to hold the enemy pinned down. Cutts therefore withdrew his infantry just beyond musket-shot, and made his colonels advance their platoons from each company in succession to deliver their fire and retire out of range. Thus the repulse was accepted. At this moment, however, though it was not fully realized, twenty-seven French battalions were occupied by sixteen of the allies. It is probable that Cutts' unused Hanoverian brigade, moving to its right, rejoined the main body of Churchill's infantry.

Shortly after midday Marshal Tallard, conceiving that there would be another two hours' delay before the attack, decided to visit the left of the Elector's line to survey the situation there. He had not been with the Elector long when the heavy firing around Blenheim recalled him to his own army. He noticed that Clérambault had drawn the reserve into the village, but he took no steps to alter this decision. As he sat his horse upon the gentle rise on which his cavalry stood his attention was riveted by an episode which made a disconcerting and profound impression upon his mind. Marlborough's first line of infantry was already crossing the Nebel and drawing up in solid bodies on the firm ground. His first line of cavalry were now leading their horses continuously along the causeways. Five English squadrons from Lumley's command who had scrambled across near the burning mills were actually formed in the low ground on the edge of the plain. The eight squadrons of Gendarmerie, some of which had, as we have seen, already been sharply engaged, were ordered by General Zurlauben to charge these intruders. They swept down upon them in an enveloping formation. But the five English squadrons, under Colonel Palmes, charging outward in three directions, broke the wings of the charge, and then, wheeling inward in perfect discipline and horsemanship, fell upon the centre of the Gendarmerie, completely routed them, and pursued them three hundred yards behind the Maulweyer brook, which flows through Blenheim. It was true that these squadrons, carried away by their zeal, came under tremendous fire from the outskirts of the village, and themselves recoiled with many empty saddles to their starting-point. But what Tallard had seen struck a chill into his soul. In the account which he eventually wrote in December of the battle he remarks that, "although there were eight squadrons on our side, the five enemy squadrons sustained their shock and made them recoil." He explains the loss of the

battle "first, because the Gendarmerie were not able to break the five English squadrons."[1] Well might Marlborough say, "The troops I carry with me are very good."

The Elector, who was galloping about in the most dangerous places, and had strayed far from his own troops, now heavily engaged, was also a spectator of this encounter. "What!" he cried to his staff, "there is the Gendarmerie running away! Is it possible? Go, gentlemen, tell them that I am here in person. Rally them and lead them back to the charge." The unfortunate gentleman who endeavoured to obey his behests was severely wounded, taken prisoner by an English officer, to whom he hastily presented his cross of the Order of Würtemberg and a hundred and thirty-seven *louis d'or*, and only escaped as he was being led off because his captor was laid low by the Blenheim musketry.[2]



PALMES'S CHARGE

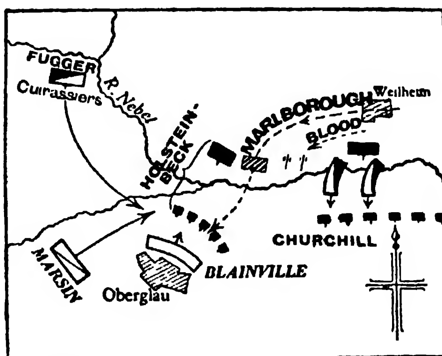
While these exciting incidents attracted unduly the attention of the hostile High Command, Marlborough's main body was gradually but ceaselessly forming beyond the Nebel. Already the first line of the infantry had advanced far enough to enable the first and a good part of the second line of cavalry to draw up in good order. Tallard now directed a cavalry charge upon the left of this array. Through confusion or neglect only a part of the squadrons he designed to use committed themselves to the charge. Much disorder was caused to the left of the allied line. Four or five English squadrons were rolled up from the flank. It was a dangerous moment, but the fire of the infantry repulsed the horsemen, and General Lumley made good the line by bringing across several fresh Danish and Hanoverian squadrons. Nothing could more plainly illustrate the delicate and hazardous character of the great operation which Marlborough was conducting in his centre, so long as it remained incomplete.

But now around Oberglau a new crisis arose. The Prince of

[1] Pelet, iv, 575.

[2] *Ibid.*, 586.

Holstein-Beck, with ten battalions forming the right of General Churchill's infantry, advanced to storm the village. The Prince, with the two leading battalions, had hardly crossed the Nebel when M. de Blainville, who commanded in Oberglau, drew out into the open nine battalions against them. Among these was the Irish Brigade in the French service, known at the wars as the "Wild Geese." At the same time the Prince found himself threatened on his right by Marsin's cavalry. He sent to ask for aid from Fugger's brigade of Imperial Cuirassiers, which was covering the left of Eugene's renewed attack. Fugger replied that he could not move without Eugene's orders. Blainville's nine battalions now came forward, with the "Wild Geese" yelling in the van. The two confederate battalions were overwhelmed. Holstein-Beck, bleeding from mortal wounds, fell into the hands of the enemy, and the other flank, the right this time, of Marlborough's ever-growing formation beyond the Nebel was laid open to Marsin's cavalry. Not only was this danger grave in itself, but the French counter-attack from Oberglau threatened to break the contact between the two wings of the allied army.



ACTION ROUND OBERGLAU

The whole front from the Danube to the hills was roaring with fire and conflict. "From one end of the armies to the other every one was at grips and all fighting at once—a feature very rare in battles."[1] Marlborough, who had lately been watching the battle from the rising ground behind Unterglau, attended by his retinue, now came quickly forward, passed the burning villages, crossed the Nebel by a causeway, and took personal control at the danger-point. He led forward three Hanoverian battalions from Holstein-Beck's reserve. He made Colonel Blood bring a battery of cannon across the streamlet. With these he threw the Irish back some distance towards Oberglau. In this breathing-space the rest of Holstein-Beck's command began to form a line on the firm ground. This was the moment for Marsin's cavalry beyond Oberglau to renew their

[1] Mérode Westerloo, p. 309.

charges, and strenuous efforts were made to gather a strong force and set it in motion.

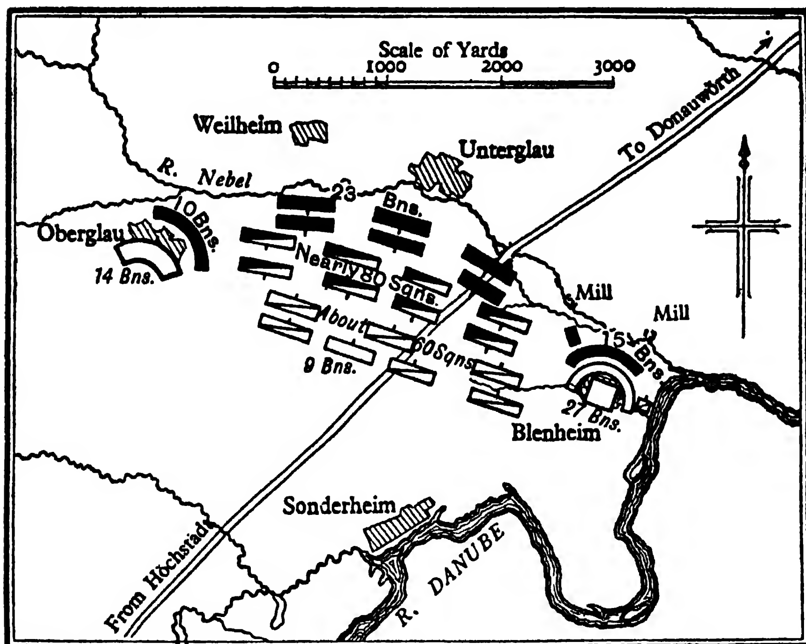
But meanwhile Marlborough had sent a personal message to Prince Eugene asking for the use of Fugger's brigade. Eugene was himself in an intense crisis. His second attack was quavering on the verge of repulse. Marlborough's aide-de-camp found him in the front line. He made his request. Without a moment's hesitation Eugene gave the order. The Imperial Cuirassiers changed front and advanced towards Oberglau. At that moment Marsin's cavalry advanced to the charge. But Fugger's cuirassiers charged at the same time and, striking at a favourable angle and on the bridle hand, threw back Marsin's squadrons in disorder. Marlborough, planting his battery to rake Blainville's line, was now able to move forward again with the three Hanoverian battalions, supported by the growing masses of Holstein-Beck's command. The struggle around Oberglau rose to a climax, both sides being closely engaged and their cannon firing grape and even case. But by three o'clock Blainville's troops were driven in upon the village, and Marlborough, nearly one thousand yards beyond the Nebel, was able to pen them, as Cutts was penning the much larger masses in Blenheim. This was the second crisis in the passage and deployment of Marlborough's centre.

A lull now descended upon the battlefield. The firing had lasted more than six hours and physical contact for nearly two, and everywhere it seemed that the armies reeled. Dr Hare, who followed his chief among the balls, has recorded, "Before three I thought we had lost the day."[1] Tallard has declared, "At this moment [the charge upon the left of Marlborough's centre] I saw the hope of victory." These perils had been surmounted. But, indeed, many an experienced officer in Europe, impartially surveying the scene, would have pronounced the allies defeated. They had failed with ghastly slaughter to take Blenheim. Nothing but deadlock existed there. They had equally failed to take Oberglau, and only narrowly escaped a severance of their wings. The whole of Prince Eugene's attack had come to a standstill. For nearly three-quarters of an hour the two lines of cavalry in this quarter stood facing each other at sixty yards' distance, neither of them able to move forward or strike another blow. In vain did Eugene on one side and the Elector on the other ride along the ranks animating, commanding, entreating, and taunting their exhausted and shaken soldiers to a

[1] Hare's Journal.

renewed effort. At no point, it seemed, could the allies move forward. Yet it was certain they could not stay where they were. If they could not advance they must soon retreat. If they retreated they were lost.

Nevertheless at this moment Marlborough was sure of victory.



LEFT AND CENTRE AT 4 P.M.

Shortly after three o'clock he sent one of his aides, Lord Tunbridge, to Eugene, announcing that all was well in the centre. From the tumult of battle his design was now emerging. Although his total army had at the beginning been several thousands fewer than the French, and although it had suffered up to this point perhaps double their losses, he was now in a position of overwhelming strength. By four o'clock the whole of the cavalry and the whole of Churchill's infantry were formed in good order on the farther side of the Nebel opposite the French centre. The cavalry now formed the first two lines and the infantry the second pair. The English field batteries were moving forward to join them. Upon the two-mile stretch from Blenheim to Oberglau he had now nearly 80 squadrons, only a few of which had yet charged, against 50 or 60 French, many of whom had been several times engaged. Upon

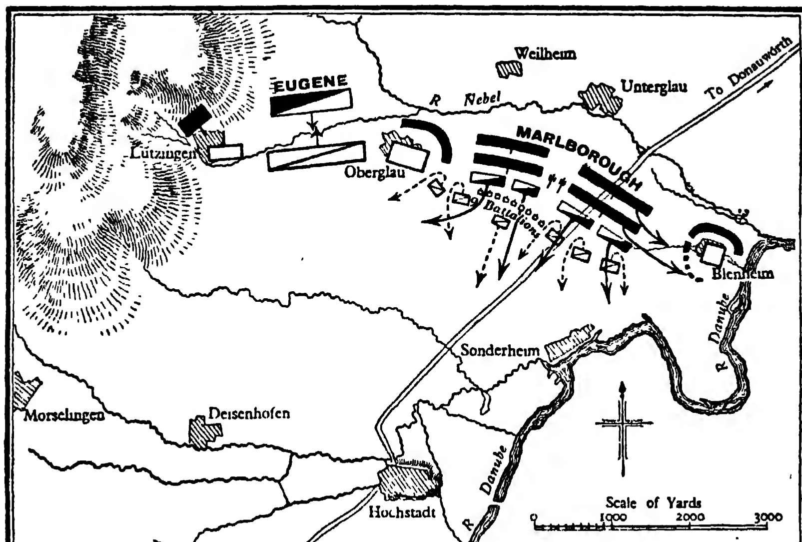
the same front he had 23 battalions against only 9. Leaving the bloody local fight around Oberglau, he now rode to conduct the advance of this formidable array.

The pause in the battle continued for a while. The reason for it is plain. Marlborough wished to concert the attack upon the whole front, and Eugene after his second repulse required time to reorganize. At half-past four, when the Danish infantry had worked their way round the Bavarians on the extreme left of Lutzingen, the battle was renewed at all points. The Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, carrying a regimental colour in his hand, led forward for the third time the redoubtable Prussian Foot. Eugene advanced again at the head of the Imperial cavalry. And now between Blenheim and Oberglau Marlborough's long lines, horse and foot together, were set in motion. The impact of so great a body of troops, comparatively fresh, upon the weakest part of a wasted front everywhere closely engaged, after so many hours, might reasonably be expected to be decisive. It was not in character different from the march of the French centre against the plateau of Pratzen by which Napoleon so suddenly yet so surely gained the battle of Austerlitz. There is a grand simplicity in two or three to one at the decisive point. To procure it—there lies the secret.

Marshal Tallard had still two lines of cavalry with which to fill a threatened front. But he no longer trusted them fully. On the other hand, whether because he was physically short-sighted or because he still counted upon a helpful sortie by the troops in Blenheim, he does not seem to have at all measured the preponderance of the forces about to fall upon him. "We neglected the great double lines," wrote a French general officer at Tallard's side, "which were forming at the foot of that fatal hill." Still, Tallard had used the interval to interlace his second line of cavalry with the nine battalions which were his last resource in infantry. He does not seem to have attempted to draw any of the surplus troops from Blenheim. He was content to order them to break out and attack the flank of the hostile advance. They had for some time tried to do this; but it was as hard for them to come out of the village as for Lord Cutts to enter it. The English and Hessian brigades which stood around the outskirts could plainly see any gap being opened in the defences for a sortie; and they shot down with a concentrated fire every French party which emerged before it could form a line. In this quarter the tables were entirely turned.

Meanwhile Marlborough's attack was almost abreast of a line

drawn from Blenheim to Oberglau, and so far there had been no collision. Tallard, who now saw doom outstaring him, ordered his first line to charge; and they became intermingled with Marlborough's squadrons, who do not seem at this time to have quickened their pace beyond a walk. "All our Brigades," writes the French general already quoted,



THE BREAK-THROUGH

> charged briskly, and made all the Squadrons they attacked give way; but these Squadrons *being sustained by several lines of horse and foot*, our men were forced to shrink back, and throw themselves on our second line, which, being at some distance, gave the enemy time to gain ground, which they maintained, *by their numbers*, *and their slow and close march*.[1]

The French were pressed back; but the allied horse as they advanced now came into the fire of the nine battalions. These young troops, who fought with so much gallantry for France, seconding and sustaining their cavalry, caused a good deal of disorder in Marlborough's first line, and compelled it to halt and then to retire a distance estimated by several observers at about sixty paces. The Marshal called upon his cavalry for a further effort. He met with no response. Marlborough now brought forward not only infantry but cannon to rake the devoted French battalions, some of which

[1] Lediard, i, 429.

were formed in square. A battery of nine guns, which was following up the main advance under Colonel Blood's personal direction, fired upon them with grape, while at the same time the German infantry, coming to the front through the horse, opened a devastating musketry at close quarters. As the French squares would not give way, they had to be very largely destroyed where they stood.

It was probably at this time that an incident occurred which gives us an intimate glimpse of Marlborough in action. One of his general officers was retiring with a force of cavalry in disorder. Marlborough rode up to him and, commanding a halt, remarked with ceremonious sarcasm, "Mr ——, you are under a mistake; the enemy lies that way: you have nothing to do but to face him and the day is your own."[1] Whereupon the general returned with his squadrons to the conflict.[2]

We cannot pretend to unravel the details of this uneven struggle but enough has been said to expose the delusion that the battle of Blenheim was gained by a cavalry charge. It was gained by the onset of a largely superior force of all arms working in close accord with one another at a decisive point. At least an hour elapsed between Marlborough's advance from the foot of the slope and the moment when the final charge was reached. And by that time the result could hardly be doubtful. At about half-past five Marlborough re-formed both his lines of cavalry in front of the foot. He had time to ride along their ranks, and, being now satisfied that the masses of French infantry and cavalry which still held the field before him were disorganized and could resist no more, he drew his sword and ordered the trumpets to sound the charge. Now for the first time the whole body of the allied cavalry broke into a trot, and sword in hand rode forward upon all who barred their path. The French squadrons did not await the shock. Discharging their pistols and carbines in ragged, ineffectual volleys, they broke and fled, leaving the remnants of the nine battalions to their fate. Of course, when we read of troops being 'cut to pieces' we may be sure that the greater number usually escape somehow. But these poor soldiers of France behaved so bravely that the positions they had held could be plainly seen the next day upon the battlefield by their corpses lying in ranks.

In this part of the field all serious resistance now came to an end. Tallard, who redeemed as a soldier his shortcomings as a

[1] *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* (1713), p. 72.
[2] *Histoire de Jean Churchill*, ii, 2.

general, rallied a body of his cavalry behind the tents of his camp. His one hope and duty was to procure the retreat of the infantry in Blenheim. He sent messages to them to retire, and to Marsin to come to his aid. But all control had passed out of his hands. Marlborough, with Lumley and Hompesch, the Prussian, and over seventy squadrons, was upon them. The French ran in two directions, some towards Marsin's army and the rest towards the Danube. Sending Hompesch to the right with half the cavalry, the Duke with Lumley pursued those who were making for the river. The spectacular tragedy which followed has attracted the attention of many historians.[1] The bank of the Danube near Sondenheim falls very steeply as much as fifteen or twenty feet. A mob of French horsemen, jammed knee to knee and variously computed at thirty squadrons or two thousand men, were driven headlong over this drop into the marshes and the deep, swift river; of whom the greater part were drowned. Mérode Westerloo, who after much hard fighting was caught in this rout, says that for three hundred paces he was so jammed in the crowd that "his horse never put its feet to the ground," until suddenly he was precipitated "the depth of two pikes" into a marshy meadow and buried beneath several falling cavaliers.[2] Marshal Tallard, trying to make his way into Blenheim, recognized by his Order of the Saint-Esprit, was taken prisoner with several of his staff not far from this point by a Hessian regiment. He was conducted to Marlborough, who with salutes and courtesies placed his coach at his disposal.

This was the moment when John wrote the letter to Sarah. Borrowing a piece of paper, actually a bill of tavern expenses, from an officer, he traced in pencil his well-known message:

August 13, 1704

I have not time to say more but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory. Monsieur Tallard and two other Generals are in my coach and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-Camp Colonel Parke, will give Her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another more at large.

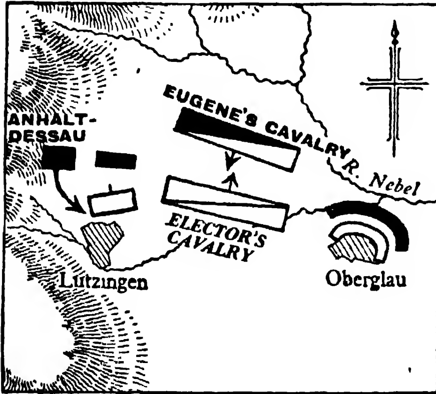
MARLBOROUGH

The destruction of Tallard's army involved the instant retreat and possible capture of Marsin and the Elector. It was now six

[1] Indeed, it is almost the only feature which Klopp has been able to discern in this long and complicated battle.

[2] Mérode Westerloo, pp. 310, 311.

o'clock. Eugene's cavalry had failed in their third attack. The Prince, infuriated at a courage not equal to his own, is said to have shot two fugitives with his own hand. Certainly he was himself in the direst peril—his coat clutched by the enemy, and his life saved only by the devotion of his troopers. When the collapse of their charge was apparent he left his cavalry with bitter words, saying that he would fight and die with the gallant infantry and not with cowards. Indeed, the Danes and Prussians had made remarkable progress. With only two squadrons of cavalry to aid them, they had driven the enemy's extreme left back more than two miles, scrambling over the spurs and valleys amid the rocks and bushes of the foothills. From these slopes the Prince could see the result of Marlborough's main attack. He saw the whole centre of the enemy break into disorder, and knew that the battle was won. Soon the smoke and flames rising from Oberglau and Lutzingen proclaimed the retreat of the army which had so valiantly withstood him. He set to work to organize his troops for pursuit.



EUGENE'S THIRD ATTACK

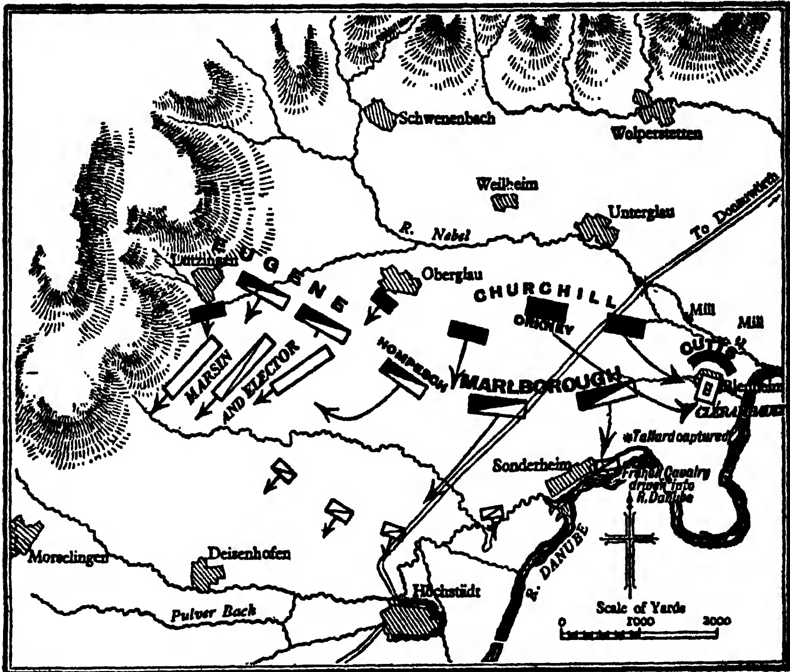
When Marshal Marsin saw Tallard's line broken and the wide plain between Oberglau and Blenheim occupied by Marlborough's troops advancing in solid formations, he resolved to retreat. The Elector and the other generals were all in agreement. The disengagement and withdrawal were effected with skill and discipline, and the army of the French left wing marched in the direction of Lauingen in admirable order. This was indeed necessary, for they must expect to have to fight hard to gain the exit between the hills and the marsh of Höchstädt. Marsin's army was by no means exhausted. They had no reason to boast about their battle. With more squadrons, with nearly double the battalions and more than double the cannon of Prince Eugene, they had been hard put to it to defend themselves. They had even ceded important ground to the attack of far less numerous forces. They had fought a self-centred battle, and had been able to give no help to their friends on

the right, with whose defeat their own was now involved. These facts attest the glory of Prince Eugene, whose fire and spirit had extorted the wonderful exertions of his troops; who after contending all day against very heavy odds held the initiative and the offensive to the end; and who, moreover, in the midst of local disaster had not hesitated to answer Marlborough's call for the Cuirassier brigade. By seven o'clock the whole of Marsin's army, escorting their prisoners and rescuing on their way two of Tallard's battalions who had already surrendered, were making for the gap above Morselingen, followed by all the troops that Prince Eugene could muster.

General Churchill, with the bulk of his 23 battalions, besides supporting the front, had the duty of protecting both flanks of Marlborough's advance against sorties from Blenheim or a counter-attack from the direction of Oberglau. As soon as Marlborough's cavalry rode on ahead in pursuit of the French his brother wisely turned his main force to the left against Blenheim in order to encircle and capture the mass of French infantry known to be in the village. The process of hemming in Blenheim was thus in full progress. To deter the enemy from breaking out, Churchill at a little after six asked Lord Cutts to make another attack or at least hold the enemy tight. Cutts and his troops responded generously. The remains of Rowe's British brigade headed a new assault, the third, upon the deadly defences. This time they broke in, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting was resumed all along the Nebel side of the village, as well as round the corner between the Nebel and the Maulweyer brook. Marshal Tallard, being conducted down the main road to Marlborough's coach, which we suppose was still some distance behind the Nebel, saw this furious combat flare up on his right hand. He induced one of the officers escorting him to bear a message from him to the Duke offering, if he would "let these poor fellows retire," to prevent all further firing by the French. Marlborough had now joined Hompesch between Oberglau and Morselingen, and was organizing a cavalry charge upon the flank of Marsin's columns, which could be seen approaching half a mile away. He was surprised at Tallard's presumption. He replied severely, "Inform Monsieur de Tallard that in the position in which he now is, he has no command."

Meanwhile Marsin's army in three columns, the outer ones of cavalry, was drawing near, and Hompesch was about to charge, when another large body of troops in good formation came in

sight from behind Oberglau village. These were thought to be Marsin's rearguard. They were so disposed as to take in flank such a charge as Hompesch was about to make. They were in fact the leading brigades of Prince Eugene following the French, and themselves seeking a chance of attack. Marlborough, in no mood to

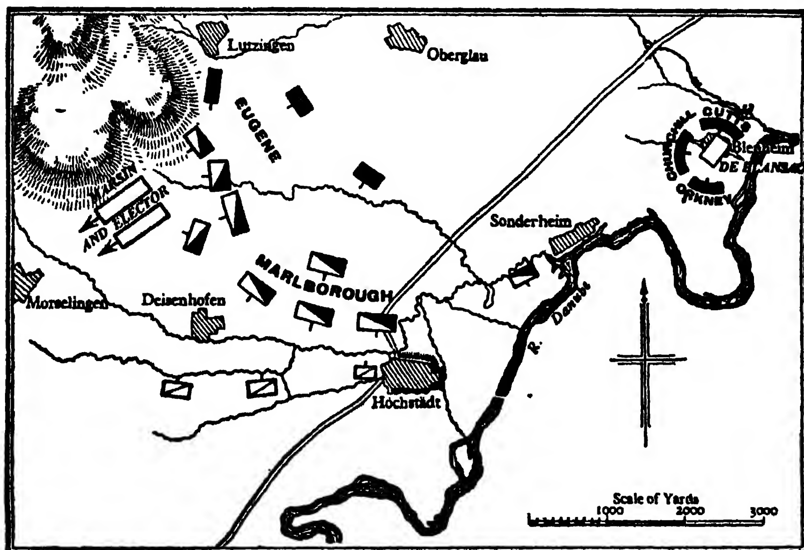


THE PURSUIT

compromise his victory, sent out patrols to make sure of the truth, and meanwhile waited. Eugene in his turn mistook Hompesch for a part of Tallard's cavalry, and likewise paused to assure himself. By the time these mistakes were discovered Marsin and the Elector had made such progress across Marlborough's front that a new attack meant a new battle. The Duke surveyed the scene against the setting sun. He observed the firm attitude of the enemy and their superior numbers. He knew that he had the bulk of Tallard's infantry—how many he could not tell—behind him in Blenheim, still to be mastered. He decided to break off the pursuit of Marsin, and in all the circumstances his judgment should be accepted.

The last scene in the drama of Blenheim lay around the village which finally gave its name to the battle. The garrison comprised

the best infantry of France and its proudest regiments. They had repulsed every attack with heavy slaughter and so far with no great loss to themselves. But many had seen—and it needed no military knowledge to understand—what had happened on the plain and what its consequences to them would be. Their army was routed, and they were cut off. The Marquis de Clérambault, whose nervousness or folly had crowded Tallard's reserves into the village, saw himself the cause of the disaster which had befallen the army and



THE END OF THE BATTLE

was now to overtake himself and all those for whom he was responsible. His brain reeled. He sought in flight a still more fearful safety. Without a word to his subordinates or giving anyone a chance to assume the command, he rode to the river, attended only by his groom. The man tried the passage and escaped: his master followed, "apparently," says Saint-Simon cruelly, "intending thereafter to live as a hermit." But the swirl of the Danube mercifully extinguished a life for which there was no room on earth. More charitable tales have been told of his conduct. He had gone to examine the riverbank—a cannon-ball had startled his horse, and he had fallen into the river; or again that he sought in its wave the death he found.

From seven o'clock, when he disappeared, till nearly eight the twenty-seven battalions in Blenheim had no leader, and received no orders. Meanwhile they were attacked on every side. Three or

four battalions of British infantry under Lord Orkney, with the Greys and the 5th Dragoons and four guns, had cut off all retreat shortly after seven o'clock. Cutts, Churchill, and Orkney assaulted continually. Orkney from the back of the village reached the churchyard, the Buffs in the van, while at the same time every cannon and howitzer within reach fired into the crowded streets from the north and the east. All the assailants were driven out. M. de Blansac now assumed command, and strenuous efforts were made to sally forth at several points. The fire of the surrounding troops, which were constantly reinforced, shattered the heads of every formation. The three British Generals, working in spontaneous combination, all realized the tremendous prize they had in their grip. A French brigade which had actually debouched was brought to parley, and its commander allowed himself to be sent in to bring the rest to reason. Agitated argument began about capitulation. Orkney, whose line across the rear of the village was none too strong, used bold language. Resistance was impossible. The Duke, he said, was coming with the whole army. All must surrender at once as prisoners of war. The one concession granted by Churchill, to whom the issue was referred, was that the officers should not be searched.

The grief and fury of these unbeaten troops have often been described. The regiment of Navarre burned its standards, and many officers refused to sign the convention; but this could hardly avail them much. Before nine o'clock the surrender was complete. It was not till then that Marlborough's orders arrived. The Duke, concerned at the very great numbers he now knew to be in the place, would run no risks. All the troops were to lie on their arms, and by morning he would bring the entire army. But the work had already been completed by his competent lieutenants. "Without vanity," wrote Orkney, "I think we did our pairts."[1] And so had they all.

"The British troops at Blenheim," says Sergeant Millner, "formed a lane wherein the prisoners stood all night, and They on the Watch over the same."

[1] Athole Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 62.

Chapter Twenty-one

THE CONSEQUENCES OF VICTORY

1704—AUGUST

COLONEL PARKE rode fast across Europe, spreading the good tidings through the German and Dutch cities as he passed. On the morning of the 10th/21st he delivered his note to Sarah at St James's, who sent him on with it at a gallop to Windsor. Queen Anne sat in the big bay-window of the long gallery overlooking the Terrace, and serious must have been her thoughts. Here, at the summit of England's war effort, many grievous pressures met in a sovereign's breast. It was but five days before that she had been forced to assent to the Security Act of the Scots Parliament with all the injury which it threatened to her island. She knew that far away in Germany Mr Freeman meant to strike some blow that should kill or cure. Rulers in constitutional states hear tales from many quarters, and the Queen understood only too well that the entire political system of her reign was under grave and pent-up challenge. She could read the stress of the times in Mr Montgomery's anxious eyes. With all her patient courage—and, let us add, Stuart obstinacy—she had sustained the men she trusted against the gathering antagonism of Parliament and society, and amid the growing degeneration of her affairs both at home and abroad.

A scarlet horseman has crossed the river: news of battle is in the air. They bring the weary messenger to her presence. He falls on his knee, but before he speaks she knows that all is well. He hands her Marlborough's note to Sarah, and tells her that with his own eyes he has seen the first army of France broken into flight and ruin, and the celebrated Marshal Tallard led off prisoner by the Duke's officers.

This was no regular dispatch. That would follow in a day or so. It was but a message to the Cockpit circle; but as the Queen read its pencilled lines she knew that something very great had happened to her country and to the world. It was the custom to give the messenger of victory five hundred guineas, but Colonel Parke, invited to name his reward, asked instead a miniature of the Queen.

His request was granted, and in addition Anne gave him a thousand guineas in her relief and joy.

Meanwhile from Whitehall Godolphin spread the news throughout the town. The cannon of the Tower were fired; the bells were rung; copies of Marlborough's note, struck off upon the presses, passed from hand to hand. A wave of enthusiasm swept all classes. The streets were filled with cheering crowds. Bonfires and illuminations disputed the night. "Never were such demonstrations of joy since the laying of London stone."[1] Nor were these rejoicings unwarranted. Indeed, they arose from the smallest part of what had happened. Every one could understand that the Grand Monarch had had a drubbing, and that Marlborough had caught his famous general, old Tallard, the Ambassador, well known at St James's, and packed him in his coach. But few could measure the consequences, and none could foresee how the fortunes of Britain would now broaden through the centuries.

The news of Blenheim came also to Versailles. A few days before the battle there had been a splendid evening fête at the Court. The most brilliant society in Europe was assembled, and the warm, delicious night favoured the festivities. Upon a triumphal car attended by warriors and nymphs the God of War was drawn past the daïs on which the Great King sat, and Louis XIV displayed a lively pleasure in accepting his dutiful salute. Then followed an allegorical representation of the state of Europe, in which all its rivers played their parts. The Thames, the Scheldt, the Rhine, the Meuse, the Neckar, and also the Danube made their submission to the assured pre-eminence of the Seine. The festival culminated in a prodigy of fireworks designed to bring home to the numerous and exalted company a vivid picture of modern war.

An even more arresting topic occupied the Court. A dispute had arisen between two of the highest nobles upon their respective precedence. The historical argument ran back through the centuries, and raised at various stages some of the most delicate issues that had ever concerned a Board of Green Cloth. The whole Court was divided upon the question, and a solemn tribunal had been appointed to resolve it. The keen interest of the King in the matter was well known, and his calm suspension of judgment admired. The intriguing dilemma even interested the common people, and while the whole vast palace was thronged with courtier-notables, there

[1] Trevelyan, *England under Queen Anne: Blenheim*, 397.

was also a concourse upon its approaches. The imminence of the verdict kept all minds on tenterhooks. But one afternoon rumours began to spread of something ugly which had happened in Bavaria, and presently it was known that a courier from one of the armies in the field had been conducted by Chamillart to the King. They all had something else to talk about after that.

We must return to the Danube. Hare in his Journal says that as the night fell

> His Grace gave orders about dressing the wounded men and putting them under cover. Then he made a separation of the French prisoners, which amounted to eleven or twelve thousand men. They had at least as many more killed and wounded. These prisoners, with their generals, being divided and disarmed were ordered to the adjacent villages in the rear of our Army, guarded by several squadrons of Horse Dragoons. The Author was commanded by General Churchill to go along with that part which was escorted by Colonel Wynne, to take a list of the French generals and other officers, and he humbly conceives it may not be thought improper or impertinent to recite this observation he made—viz., that after he had taken the generals names he went into a room where were at least 60 or 70 officers-subalterns, of which, some were blaming the conduct of their own Generals, others walking with their arms folded, others were laid down lamenting their hard fortune and complaining for want of refreshment, till at last, abandoning all reflections of this nature, their chief concern was for their King, abundance of these muttering and plainly saying, Oh que dira le Roy!

Sergeant Millner sets forth with careful pride the full tally of the slain, the wounded, and the captives.[1] The sergeant's catalogue of

[1]

Generals or noted Persons killed in the Field, or drowned in the Danube	9
The Quantity of Thirty Squadrons rushed into the Danube and drowned, computed	4400
Killed in the Time of the Battle, Officers included	6000
Wounded or disabled therein, Officers included	8000
Total killed and wounded, including the Thirty Squadrons drowned, and Ten Battalions cut in Pieces, with the Quantity of Twenty-two Battalions otherwise killed and wounded in the Action	18409
Deserted in the Battle and precipitate Retreat, otherwise computed	5000
Total killed or drowned, wounded and deserted	23409

Note, That Three Generals of the aforesaid Nine were assuredly wounded, but no Account could be had of the other Six, whether killed in the Field, or drowned in the

grisly spoils, although a little sanguine, has not been seriously challenged by the estimates of later times. The casualties of the allies were certainly not less than the 12,700 which he has recorded. Indeed, the later details of the British losses would seem to raise this figure considerably. The confederate army had lost by fire and steel nearly a quarter of its numbers. Six thousand lay dead upon the field, and the thirty-five or forty thousand hale men who stood to arms on August 14, worn out by their prodigious exertions and sleepless nights, had, besides their own six or seven thousand

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Danube; but certainly they were left in either of the twain; amongst which there was Four Marquises, Two Counts, and one Duke, whose Names I have here omitted.

Taken, Count Tallard, their Captain General, Four Lieutenant Generals, Six Major Generals and Eight Brigadiers, Three other Colonels of Horse, Three of Dragoons, and Thirteen of Foot; most Counts, Marquises, Princes, Dukes and Barons, besides Three Marquises, and One Prince Captain of the Gen d'armes	41
Besides all the Lieutenants, Colonels and Majors of the aforesaid Twenty-eight Battalions, and Twelve Squadrons of Dragoons, each computed to be compleat thereof	64
Of Captains and subaltern Officers, computed accordingly	1095
In the Twenty-eight Battalions of Centinels, &c. with some Stragglers, that fell into Blenheim	12200
In the Twelve Squadrons, including also some Stragglers, and otherwise	1800
Total of the whole killed or drowned, wounded, taken and deserted	38609

By the several particular Accounts of the Enemies Loss, it appears that of the Sixty Thousand Men their Army consisted of before the Battle, there escaped but Twenty-one Thousand Three Hundred and Ninety One. Besides, there were several noted Persons and others taken by the other Allies, which I never found to insert herein.

The Enemy were industrious enough in concealing their particular Losses, but whether of these two Particulars it be, it matters not much; doubtless their Loss was very great in every Respect whatsoever; being conquered, beat and quite defeated; although Eight Thousand Men stronger than the Allies Army, besides being strongly posted with the Advantage of the Ground. . . .

Taken of War Utensils or Trophies, one Hundred Cannon, Twenty-four Mortars, One Hundred Seventy One Standards, One Hundred Twenty Nine Pair of Colours, Seventeen Pair of Kettle Drums, Fifteen Pontoons, Twenty-four Barrels, and Eight Casks of Silver, Thirty-four fine Coaches, Three Hundred loaded Mules, and Three Thousand Six Hundred Tents, standing and struck.

In the Confederates gaining this compleat, honourable, glorious, ever-renowned, memorable Conquest, and triumphant heroical Victory, over and against the proud and lofty French Army and Bavarians at Hochstat, August 2d. their Loss was computed Twelve Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-eight Men, killed and wounded, including Two Hundred and Seventy-four that were lost by Desertion, or otherwise taken moroding in the Time of our Army's Abode in Bavaria. . . .

wounded and an equal number of the enemy wounded, twelve thousand prisoners on their hands: in all twenty-five thousand to tend or guard.

Considering that the whole impulse and vigour of the war emanated from Marlborough and Eugene, how generously they hazarded their lives and fortunes, and the immense personal contribution of their genius, it is remarkable that the negative, passive, or selfish elements which composed the mass of the alliance should have been so ready to criticize any shortcomings in those to whom they owed their salvation. But many who were incapable of even dreaming of the superb event which the two heroic men had produced were sharp enough soon to complain that the battle of Blenheim was not followed by a pursuit. The circumstances in which Marlborough decided not to renew the action against Marsin in the sunset of August 13 have already been described. But why, it was asked, were Marsin and the Elector not followed hotly in succeeding days? They had crossed the Danube at Lauingen on the 14th, burning the bridges behind them. On the 16th and 17th they were at Ulm, protected by the fortress. Was it not possible to overtake them there?

The rapid movements before the battle and the sudden addition of thousands of prisoner-mouths above the prescribed population of the camp was paralysing. Bread was the imperious need. The Austrian Military History says revealingly:

> The commissariat of the Danube army, which till now had only been asked to supply the needs of the troops during a slow change of villages, had suddenly to call to life an organization which would probably have to follow the army to the Rhine almost at once. The principal lack was again money to buy what was required in Franconia and collect transport; while in the neighbouring Bavaria the requisition commands found everything charred and devastated and the farms and monasteries abandoned by the inhabitants. It was already a bitter revenge.[1]

This, added to the burden of the prisoners and the wounded, is an ample explanation. It was with difficulty indeed that the army moved forward on the 14th about four miles into a position opposite the Elector's old stronghold and bridgeheads, Lauingen and Dillingen. Here they remained for four days.

Lord Acton, in the exiguous but much-esteemed lectures which

[1] *Feldzüge*, vi, 530.

were almost all he gave to the world as the results of his life of study and capacious knowledge, said of the battle:

> Eugene at that moment was the most renowned commander in Europe. Marlborough was better known as a corrupt intriguer who owed his elevation to the influence of his wife at Court, who would disgrace himself for money, *who had sought favour at St Germains by betraying the expedition to Brest.* Blenheim altered the relative position of the two men in the eyes of the world. It was known that the day had been won not by the persistent slaughter of brave soldiers, but by an inspiration of genius executed under heavy fire with all the perfection of art. *In the midst of the struggle Marlborough had suddenly changed his order of battle, gathered his squadrons on a new line, and sent them against the French centre, with infantry supports.* He did what Napoleon was vainly entreated to do in his last engagement. That is what suggested the simile of the angel, and what Addison meant by the words: "Rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm." The great Eugene had done well, as he always did. The Englishman had risen in a single day to the foremost rank of generals. And England rose with him.[1]

The reader who has persevered in this account will judge for himself the early sentences of this rare deliverance: but in his military comments the great mute student, though complimentary, is wrong. On the plainest reading of facts there was no "sudden change in Marlborough's order of battle," no "gathering of his squadrons on a new line." Marlborough's part throughout was to conquer the French right and centre. This he could only do by carrying the main body of his army across the Nebel between Blenheim and Oberglau and outfighting Tallard on the open plain. It would be a great help to him to capture Blenheim, and he assuredly bid high for the prize. But if he had taken Blenheim in the early afternoon he could never have moved the mass of his army through the village or across the water-meadows between it and the Danube. There would still have remained the task, so full of danger, of bringing his army across the Nebel and forming a line of battle beyond it. Short of the capture of Blenheim, nothing could help him more in this than the attracting into the village of the largest number of French infantry. For either purpose he must make the same kind of furious attack which he had led on the enemy's right at the Schellenberg. But the failure to storm the village required no alteration in his general plan. As we have seen, only one brigade of infantry and a few squadrons of cavalry were withdrawn from Cutts' command, and

[1] *Lectures in Modern History*, p. 259.

these used to wall off the enemy in Blenheim from interfering with the main advance, which once it began proved, as Marlborough had expected, irresistible. There was therefore no change of the plan, which, in fact, unfolded methodically, hardly modified at all by the convulsions of battle.

The one great hazard which Marlborough was forced to run was the crossing of the rivulet and its marshes. On this his judgment and much else were staked. He achieved it by the peculiar tactical arrangement of his lines of horse and foot, which arose from his understanding of the new power of firearms. It should not be assumed that Tallard could have prevented the passage by attacking earlier with his whole cavalry. He might well have worn them out against the fire of the steady and well-trained infantry of Marlborough's first line. Yet this operation and the passage of the Nebel was at once the main, the most original, and the most dangerous part of the plan. When in the morning Eugene rode off to attack the much larger numbers of Marsin's army, and thought also of the task which his comrade must perform or perish, he may well have felt that their burden had been fairly divided.

Meanwhile the victors triumphed. A solemn thanksgiving service was celebrated with joy-fire of musketry, and triple discharges of cannon. Marlborough's bearing towards the captives won general admiration. "Whereas Prince Eugene was harsh," wrote Saint-Simon, "the Duke of Marlborough treated them all, even the humblest, with the utmost attention, consideration, and politeness, and with a modesty perhaps more distinguished than his victory."[1] . . . The rank and file of the prisoners reserved to him received by his orders every possible comfort and favour. Some of the interchanges have been preserved:

> MARLBOROUGH: I am very sorry that such a cruel misfortune should have fallen upon a soldier for whom I have had the highest regard.
>
> TALLARD: And I congratulate you on defeating the best soldiers in the world.
>
> MARLBOROUGH: Your Lordship, I presume, excepts those who had the honour to beat them.[2]

All the Frenchmen of every rank showed the keenest admiration for the Great Twin Captains, as they were already regarded, and clustered round them in curiosity. The soldierly

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iv, 130.

[2] *Histoire de Jean Churchill*, ii, 11; *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*, p. 73.

bearing of a French private to whom Marlborough spoke drew from him the remark, "If the King of France had many men like you, he would soon be victorious." To which the soldier, somewhat unkindly to his superiors who stood around, rejoined, "It is not men like me he lacks, but a general like you." A trumpet was sent with a small escort to fetch Tallard's own coach from the enemy's lines, and every personal consideration was shown to him. Marlborough had known him well in London, and the Marshal's misfortunes commanded his sympathy in a peculiar degree. Not only was Tallard wounded, a captive, a discredited general, a broken man, but his son had been slain at his side. And Marlborough rendered him one act of real kindness. He enabled the ruined commander to give his own account of his conduct and of the battle promptly to Louis XIV. Tallard's friend the Marquis de Silly, also a prisoner, was on the 18th given two months' parole and a safe-conduct through Germany by the Duke's express direction.[1] No greater service could be rendered to a man in Tallard's position; and yet a cynic might observe that allied interests would be in no way prejudiced by any controversy that might arise between the Marshal who had been taken and the Marshal who had escaped.

John to Sarah

August 14

Before the battle was quite done yesterday I wrote to my dearest soul to let her know that I was well, and that God had blessed her majesty's arms with as great a victory as has ever been known; for prisoners I have the marshal de Tallard, and the greatest part of his general officers, above 8000 men, and near 1500 officers. In short, the army of M. de Tallard, which was that which I fought with, is quite ruined; that of the elector of Bavaria, and the marshal de Marsin, which prince Eugene fought against, I am afraid has not had much loss, for I can't find that he has many prisoners. As soon as the elector knew that monsieur de Tallard was like to be beaten, he marched off, so that I came only time enough to see him retire. . . . I am so very much out of order with having been seventeen hours on horseback yesterday, and not having been able to sleep above three hours last night, that I can write to none of my friends. However I am so pleased with this action that I can't end my letter without being so vain as to tell my dearest soul that within the memory of man there has been no victory so great as this; and as I am sure you love me entirely well, you will be infinitely pleased with what has been done, upon my account as well as the great benefit the public will have. For

[1] Marlborough to the Duke-Regent of Würtemberg, *Dispatches*, p. 147.

had the success of prince Eugene been equal to his merit, we should in that day's action have made an end of the war.[1]

John to Sarah

STEINHEIM
August 18

I have been so very much out of order for these four or five days that I have been obliged to be let blood, which I hope will set me right; for I should be very much troubled not to be able to follow the blow we have given, which appears greater every day than another, for we have now above 11,000 prisoners. I have also this day a deputation from the town of Augsburg to let me know that the French were marched out of it yesterday morning, by which they have abandoned the country of Bavaria, so that the orders are already given for the putting a garrison into it. If we can be so lucky as to force them from Ulm, where they are now all together, *we shall certainly then drive them to the other side of the Rhine.*[2] After which we flatter ourselves that the world will think we have done all that could have been expected from us.

This day the whole army has returned their thanks to Almighty God for the late success, and I have done it with all my heart; for never victory was so complete, notwithstanding that they were stronger than we, and very advantageously posted. But believe me, my dear soul, there was an absolute necessity for the good of the common cause to make this venture, which God has so blessed. . . . My dearest life, if we could have another such a day as Wednesday last, I should then hope we might have such a peace as that I might enjoy the remaining part of my life with you.[3]

Every one could see, as Lediard says, that "the Face of Affairs was wholly changed."[4] The first decision of Marlborough and Eugene was to bring in the Margrave. There was no sense in besieging Ingolstadt when the whole of Bavaria must almost certainly fall into their hands by a treaty. Augsburg and Memmingen had already been abandoned by their French garrisons, and their deputations were at Marlborough's headquarters imploring government and protection. Ulm was obviously the first objective; and for that siege the cannon deployed before Ingolstadt was required. Evidently the two captains had conscience-pricks about the Margrave, and were anxious to deprecate his jealousy and wrath. Above all, they must persuade him to relinquish the virgin fortress

[1] Coxe, ii, 6.

[2] This shows that Marlborough never even contemplated an attempt to cut off the retreating army. He was in the grip of Supply.

[3] Coxe, ii, 8.

[4] Lediard, i, 447.

whose capture might have consoled him for absence from the victory. Their methods were elaborate. An officer was sent with letters making two requests. The first was that the Margrave should adjudicate the division of the prisoners, and especially the prisoners of note, between the two successful commanders; the second that he should march at once with all his troops and siege train to join them. The Margrave had received with incredulity the first accounts of the battle. As the tremendous facts and the new situation impressed themselves upon him amazement gave way to that bitter rancour which was thenceforward to hinder the allied cause, and make himself the butt of Europe. Still, on public grounds he was bound to rejoice. He could hardly repulse the compliment and implied superiority of rank of being arbiter upon the captives. Forthwith he assigned Marshal Tallard and his principal officers to Marlborough's share, and made an agreeable partition of the rest. In this mood he agreed to join his co-generals, and, leaving a dozen squadrons to blockade Ingolstadt, ascended the Danube by regular marches. The three generals were again united on the 25th.

Marshal Marsin and the defeated French made haste to quit Ulm. They left a garrison of nine weak French and Bavarian battalions in the fortress for the sole purpose of bargaining an honourable capitulation which would safeguard the future of the several thousand grievously wounded officers and men who could accompany them no farther. On the 20th they retreated to Tuttlingen, reduced to no more than sixteen thousand men. All the French had but one thought —to return to France. But for the Elector of Bavaria the question was more difficult.

On the night of the battle when he met d'Arco in the market-place of Leipheim (a village behind the field), he had cried out to him, "The devil take me if I know what to do now." Indeed hard choices lay before Max Emmanuel. Should he make peace with the Emperor and return chastened to his country, or should he cast in his lot as a soldier with France, and as a throneless prince with the Grand Monarch? Honour, frequently embarrassed, now pointed to Versailles; but his interest was more evenly divided. He sent to inquire from Marlborough whether the conditions which he had rejected before the battle were still open. He was answered that the accretions of territory could no longer be offered, but that if he would desert the French and furnish a contingent of eight thousand men, he should be restored to his dominions, and receive an annual subsidy from England and Holland. Marlborough, Eugene, and

Wratislaw had only with the greatest difficulty procured the consent of the Emperor, now much stiffened, to such arrangements. These seemed large inducements for a man in the Elector's plight. Moreover, his wife, for whom he had developed another brief spell of romantic affection, made an effort to join him in Marsin's camp at Tuttlingen. Escorted by 14 squadrons of Bavarian horse, who perhaps would have been more useful in the battle, she quitted Munich with five children. The allied troops occupying Memmingen forced her to return to the city.

The spectacle which was next presented of the Elector's refusing the favourable terms which were pressed upon him, separating himself from his country, from his family, and from his home, at the imperious call of honour, was impressive. In fact, however, the position was not so simple. As Vicar-General of the Spanish Netherlands, Max Emmanuel had another sphere of action in the North. All the Spanish troops in Belgium were subject to his orders. He could bring with him his own handful of Bavarians. He still believed that France was invincible; but if he were mistaken there was always another possibility. He might make an arrangement with the allies, and especially with the Dutch, to whom the independence of the barrier state was an idol. To come to terms with the Emperor about Bavaria at this juncture was certainly to sacrifice the interests he prized so dearly in Belgium: whereas a treaty with the Dutch about Belgium would naturally carry with it the restoration of his own Hereditary Lands. No one can prove that such considerations found any place in his mind. They were, however, certainly present at the council-table of Louis XIV. The King, while deeply touched by the Elector's misfortune, was surprised at the stern sacrifice of all that men hold dear which he had apparently so easily made at honour's call. Chivalric sentiment did not usually by itself, according to the long observation of the Great King, carry princes so far as that. As we shall see, the movements and conduct of the Elector in the Netherlands were watched with vigilance and suspicion from Versailles. Meanwhile some arrangement had to be made about Bavaria, and the Electress was empowered by her husband to treat with Wratislaw for an interim convention.

John to Sarah

SOFELINGEN
August 21

The poor electress has taken five of her children with her, and is following her husband, who seems to be abandoned to the French

interest. Prince Eugene and I have offered him by a gentleman that is not yet returned that if he will join in the common cause against France, he shall be put in possession of his whole country, and receive from the queen and Holland 400,000 crowns yearly, for which he should only furnish the allies with 8000 men; but I take it for granted he is determined to go for France and abandon his own country to the rage of the Germans.[1]

John to Sarah

August 25

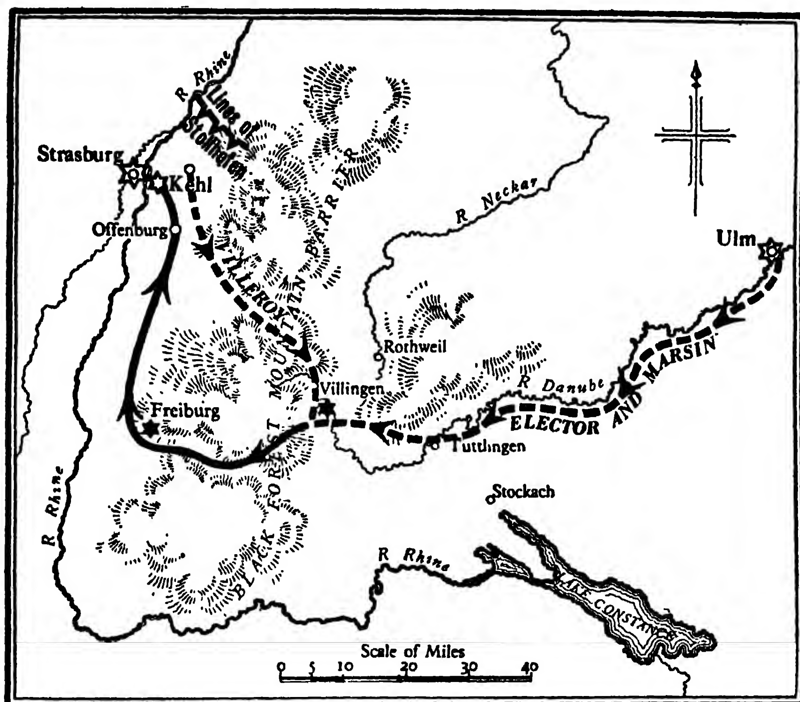
The elector of Bavaria has sent his wife and children back to Munich, and this morning by a trumpet has writ to me, and in it a letter to the electress open. It has made my heart ache, being very sensible how cruel it is to be separated from what one loves. I have sent it to her by a trumpet of my own, with assurances, that her answer shall be carefully delivered to the elector, for *I take pleasure in being easy when the service does not suffer by it.*[2]

The best—indeed, almost the only possible—route for Marsin and the defeated army lay through the Black Forest and by the tracks around Villingen along which Tallard had journeyed to his fate a few weeks before. They hoped that Villeroy as soon as he learned of the disaster would come to their assistance, and they hesitated to enter the forest-defiles of the mountains without hearing from him. They counted upon him not only for the protection of his army, but, what was even more vital, for the organization of the supplies without which they must have starved.

On August 17 Villeroy at Erlach was at length advancing against the Lines of Stollhofen in pursuance of the King's orders. That night the first reports reached him of an awful disaster upon the Danube. So far he had received no message from Marsin or from Versailles. What he heard was enough to arrest his movement. He waited in suspense during the next two days: but on the 19th, when Marsin's courier arrived, he resolved, without waiting for orders from Versailles, to march forthwith to the rescue of his defeated comrades. The decision does credit to his strategic comprehension. Only a Marshal enjoying his high favour would have dared to abandon the task so insistently prescribed by the King. Forthwith he set to work to bake bread and collect biscuit and transport, and marched with all his force along Tallard's old route towards Villingen. The fortress was still held by the Germans, but the

[1] Coxe, ii, 13. [2] *Ibid.*, 13–14.

neighbouring tracks were open. He arrived on the 23rd, and the next day the beaten army fell into his arms and upon his provision-trains. They were a tragic remnant. The Elector had but three thousand Bavarians and Marsin thirteen thousand French. Their horses were devoured by the contagious disease which had already



VILLEROY SUCCOURS MARSIN

played so recognizable a part in the story. Their officers and men were infected with the not less dangerous virus of defeat and sense of hopeless inferiority which they had contracted upon the Höchstädt battlefield. Their despondency and lack of discipline spread throughout the ranks of their rescuers, and only a passionate wish to return to France held them all together. They marched by Freiburg, Hornberg, Offenburg, and Kehl, and crossed the Rhine at Strasburg on the last day of August.

Thus ended finally the design of Louis XIV against the Empire, and his far-reaching Bavarian intrigue. The sixteen thousand war-broken men who trudged across the Strasburg bridges represented

the fragments of three powerful armies: first, the Bavarian army of 35 battalions and 55 squadrons; secondly, the army of Villars (afterwards of Marsin) of 60 squadrons and 50 battalions, together with Tallard's reinforcements, equal in themselves to 20 battalions; and, thirdly, Tallard's own army of 40 battalions and 50 squadrons. The total effort in the two campaigns could scarcely be measured by less than 150 battalions and 170 squadrons, or upward of a hundred and fifty thousand men. For all this and the vast ambitions and policies involved nothing remained but the dispirited sixteen thousand who gasped with relief when their weary feet touched again the soil of France. The Scarlet Caterpillar had not traversed the map of Europe in vain.

Blenheim is immortal as a battle not only because of the extraordinary severity of the fighting of all the troops on the field all day long, and the overwhelming character of the victory, but because it changed the political axis of the world. This only gradually became apparent. Even a month after all the facts were known, measured, and discounted, scarcely any one understood what transformations had been wrought. Until that August day the statesmen of every country must contemplate the prospect of the Elector of Bavaria supplanting the House of Hapsburg in the Imperial crown, with Munich instead of Vienna as the capital of Central Europe. Yet this Prince, should he become so bright a luminary, would be himself a planet only in the system of the Sun King. Spain and Italy would have their appointed orbits around the parent of light. The vast new regions opening beyond the oceans to the consciousness of man, those distant constellations, would shine with brightening gleams upon a French Monarchy of Europe and a dominant Gallican Church. The sullen and awkward Dutch and boorish English would perforce conform to the august design. Their recalcitrancy would be but the measure of their sufferings.

All this glittering fabric fell with a crash. From the moment when Louis XIV realized, as he was the first to realize, the new values and proportions which had been established on August 13, he decided to have done with war. Although long years of bloodshed lay before him, his object henceforward was only to find a convenient and dignified exit from the arena in which he had so long stalked triumphant. His ambition was no longer to gain a glorious dominion, but only to preserve the usurpations which he regarded as his lawful rights, and in the end this again was to shrink to no more than a desperate resolve to preserve the bedrock of France.

On the field of Blenheim also sank the fortunes of the House of Stuart. The collapse of the Grand Alliance and the hegemony of France in Europe must have brought with them so profound a disintegration of English political society that for perhaps a century at least vassalage under a French-imposed king might well have been our fate. However, a different tale was told by the good behaviour on August 13 of Cutts, Churchill, Orkney, Cadogan, Blood, Lumley, Ingoldsby, Rowe, many Captain Blackadders, and Parkers and Sergeant Millners, with their dauntless rank and file, marching onward behind the swords of Marlborough and Eugene

The terror of the French armies was broken. Forty years of successful war, the invasion of so many countries, few and minor reverses, and these repaired by victory upon a hundred fields, had brought a renown before which, even while they still resisted, the most stubborn opponents bowed their heads. French generals and French troops believed themselves to be, and were largely accepted throughout the Continent as, a superior military order. All this was changed by the Danube battle. Here was defeat, naked, brutal, murderous; defeat in spite of numbers; defeat by manœuvre and defeat by force. The prolonged severity of the fighting and the extraordinary losses of the victors proved the reality of the test. But to all this was added the sting of disgrace and ridicule. A surrender in mass of the finest infantry of France, the most famous regiments disarmed wholesale on the battlefield, the shameful confusion and collapse of command in Blenheim village, the overthrow of the French cavalry front to front by sword against pistol, their flight while their comrades perished—all these hideous disillusionings had now to be faced. And with them also arose the red star of the island troops. Their discipline, their fighting energy, their readiness to endure extraordinary losses, the competence and team-play of their officers, the handiness of their cavalry and field artillery, their costly equipment and lavish feeding, their self-assured, unaffected disdain of foreigners, became the talk of Europe. There was a quality in their attacks upon the Schellenberg and the village of Blenheim, earnest, downright, and violent, which seemed to raise the fierceness of the war to a new degree. Few they were, but thenceforward they were marked men. Soon we shall see Louis XIV writing special instructions to his marshals that in any order of battle "the best troops should be placed opposite the English."

And their Chief! Here indeed was a portent. "The day at

Höchstädt," wrote Napoleon's historian, "froze with horror the Party to the Two Crowns. Thenceforward the name of Marlborough became as it were a new power which entered into the confederacy and upheld it by a terror, the profound marks of which the passage of a century has not effaced."[1]

[1] *Histoire de Jean Churchill*, ii, 1

Chapter Twenty-two

THE RETURN TO THE RHINE

1704—SEPTEMBER

AUGUST 1704 was glorious to the British arms by sea as well as by land. Rooke had entered the Mediterranean early in May with a superior Anglo-Dutch fleet. The French had, however, determined finally to abandon the Channel and the Narrow Seas, and the Comte de Toulouse had already sailed from Brest to join the Toulon squadron. Rooke's prime task was to prevent the junction of these forces. Beyond this he was to threaten the Spanish coasts so as to draw the enemy troops from resisting the invasion of Spain from Portugal, and finally he was to establish contact with the Duke of Savoy. In pursuance of these various instructions the Admiral had for three days in May demonstrated before Barcelona, landed marines, bombarded the town, and tested the feeling of the inhabitants. The fortress appeared impregnable, but the temper of the people was found most favourable to the Austrian claimant and, as usual, sharply opposed to the rest of Spain. Rooke failed after strenuous efforts to prevent the junction of the Brest fleet and the Toulon squadron, and for the moment the superiority passed to the French. But in the middle of June he was joined in Lagos Bay by reinforcements under Sir Cloudesley Shovell and was once again the stronger. Efforts were now made by Methuen from Lisbon to induce Rooke to make another attempt upon Cadiz, but the admiral had had enough of Cadiz and, forced to act against his natural inclinations, he resolved in July to attack Gibraltar. This endeavour was crowned with great and unexpected success. The bombardment began on the 21st. While the forts were engaged by the fleet the Prince of Hesse, who was the life and soul of all these amphibious operations, landed on the isthmus and cut the fortress from the mainland, and an English captain, Edward Whittaker, apparently upon his own suggestion, landed upon the Mole and captured the silenced batteries. On July 24/August 4 the governor capitulated. The losses of the fleet were equal to the whole strength of the garrison, which was no more than three hundred men.

Gibraltar was at that time only a roadstead, and until the new moles were built a generation later could afford no permanent base for the fleet. But the magnificent aspect of the Rock and its position at the gateway of the Mediterranean were already strongly stamped upon the minds of both Louis XIV and Marlborough. The Great King sent the most urgent orders for its immediate recapture, and Marlborough as soon as this news reached him wrote that nothing should be grudged in its defence. Under imperative orders from Versailles the whole French fleet came forth to offer battle. On Sunday, August 13/24, the main fleets met before Malaga to fight the only general sea action of the war. Several detachments had weakened the Anglo-Dutch forces, and although Rooke ranged fifty-three ships in the line against fifty French, he could not be deemed the stronger. His ammunition had been depleted by the bombardment of Gibraltar; a thousand of his marines were ashore in garrison there, and his ships had been nearly six months from their home dockyards. Their bottoms were foul and their tackle in disrepair. The French fleet, on the other hand, was in perfect order.

In these circumstances the battle was long and bloody. All day from eleven in the morning till seven at night it raged in calm water with little attempt at manœuvre. The fleets lay in closest action and cannonade, each enduring heavy losses and fighting with extreme stubbornness. As the evening approached both the van and the rear of the French line (*i.e.*, the right and left wings of their line of battle) recoiled, although their centre, says Rooke, "did their duty very heartily and with great bravery." The victorious squadrons of Shovell at one end of the line and Callenburgh at the other could not press their advantage, and night fell with both fleets in the condition of which Shovell says "by the time one is beaten . . . the other is glad that the enemy has left him." In this sea battle the English lost more men killed than at Blenheim, and the casualties in the combined Anglo-Dutch fleet were nearly three thousand. Their shortage of ammunition caused the allied admirals the gravest anxiety for the morrow; but when daylight came the French, whose losses in men were even greater, had disappeared. No ships were sunk or captured on either side. The Comte de Toulouse re-entered Toulon claiming a victory for France. But, says the French historian candidly, the victory was one in which the vanquished, in default of laurels, gathered the fruits.[1] Never again in the War of the Spanish Succession did the French Navy challenge a general action. The

[1] Charles Bourel de la Roncière, *Histoire de la Marine Française*, vi (1932), 368.

capture of Gibraltar was therefore sealed by Neptune, and the allied command of the Mediterranean finally recognized. These were far-reaching events.

When Louis XIV realized that Gibraltar could not be recovered by naval action, he ordered the concentration of an army for a siege of Gibraltar upon the greatest scale. The besieging forces, which ultimately amounted to fifty thousand men, were drawn from all parts of the peninsula. The land defence of Spain was fatally weakened and disorganized, and the monarchy of Philip V lay open to the invaders. This grave decision did not commend itself to Berwick. Indeed, he carried his opposition to the abandonment of the front against Portugal to such a point that Marshal Tessé was sent to replace him. That he was right on military grounds cannot be disputed. The physical consequences of the loss of Gibraltar were overrated by the leaders of the Two Crowns; but the measures which they took to regain it proved the extraordinary moral significance which the Rock had acquired. No diversion could have been more effective, and no prize was more enduring.

Meanwhile the position of the Duke of Savoy had become desperate. The plans prepared for his punishment in the winter of 1703 came into full operation in the spring. La Feuillade and Vendôme beset him from different quarters, and one by one the remaining fortresses of Piedmont were reduced. The Emperor was incapable of sending any effective aid to his new ally, and the Sea Powers had other plans. Although his army of about thirty thousand men, opposed by double their numbers, defended themselves and their strongholds upon the whole with admirable constancy, the end of the campaign saw Victor Amadeus, with the remnants of his State, penned around Turin. But the strategic consequences of Blenheim and of Malaga revived his fortunes. On land the central power of France reeled under the stroke of the English general; at sea the command of the Mediterranean had fallen into the hands of the Admiralty. Although no actual succour in troops came to the hard-pressed Prince, the long arms of England, reaching deep into Central Europe and into the inland sea, now began to relieve him from the fierce pressures under which he was sinking. Could he but endure beyond the winter, all might be retrieved.

As a part of the attack upon the Duke of Savoy which Louis XIV had planned for 1704, a new policy had been adopted in the Cevennes. Up to this point the rebels had been treated with merciless severity

But now the atrocities with which de Broglie had blackened the countryside were replaced by the deft force and conciliation of Marshal Villars. Thither went this good servant of France to repair the loss of favour and repute he had suffered from his friction with the Elector of Bavaria. He pacified or suppressed during 1704 the revolt of the Camisards. Their most audacious leader, Cavalier, was corrupted, like Benedict Arnold in the War of American Independence, by a high command in the French Army, and after various almost comical transitions died in 1740 as George II's Governor of Jersey. The formidable character of the rebellion gradually faded. The dauntless and implacable were slowly run down and destroyed. Thus while their future strength upon the Mediterranean seaboard was compromised, the French position seemed for the time being locally restored.

After Blenheim there were still three months left of the campaigning season. Marlborough had no doubts how to use them. He wished to take Ulm, and neutralize and pacify the rest of Bavaria by a treaty. Having thus completely mastered the Danube valley and freed the Empire from all immediate danger, he proposed without a day's delay, except for supplies, to carry the entire army of the confederacy to the Rhine and thence to the Moselle. There he would establish the strongest possible forces in winter quarters for an advance towards Paris in the spring. Meanwhile he urged the Emperor directly and through Wratislaw to send substantial and speedy aid to the Duke of Savoy, and above all to make terms, involving some kind of Federal Home Rule, with the Hungarian insurgents. But the victory had seated the Emperor securely upon his ancient throne. He saw no reason to give in the days of regained strength what he had denied even in his worst straits and weakness. He and the proud incapables who surrounded him resented the interference of an English Parliamentary Government and a Dutch Republic in the domestic concerns of the Holy Roman Empire. All these Western ideas of constitutional right and self-determination for subject nationalities were subversive of the very foundations of his House. He was grateful to Marlborough for the deliverance he had brought; but he was also grateful to that Providence without whose blessing men's noblest efforts are vain, and whose strong arm required no reward but praise, for which the Church made regular provision. Moreover, the Emperor felt that he himself had contributed to the success of the allied army. Had he not prescribed the

three days of solemn intercession on the very eve of the Danube cannonade?

This affords the occasion for mentioning a minor episode upon which there is a large mass of correspondence. On June 15, when Marlborough was marching to the Danube, Wratislaw had conveyed to him a proposal from the Emperor to create him a sovereign prince of the Empire. He was to have a principality and a vote in the College or Diet of the Reich. There is no doubt that the Duke desired the proffered title. It would give him an altogether different position in the army and among the princes and notables who served under his orders. But besides this he was personally attracted by the idea of becoming a prince with the rank of Highness and inclusion in the charmed circle of Europe. It may be thought a pity that so great a man had such weaknesses. We must make him some allowances for the times in which he lived. These were not the days when such distinctions were disdained by men of mark, nor when serving democracy for its own sake was for all public personages a full reward.

Marlborough handled this matter with his usual art of having a solid and becoming reason at every stage for getting what he wanted. He wrote to Sarah and Godolphin acquainting them with the Emperor's offer, and dwelling on the embarrassment which would be caused to the public service if he were called upon to refuse it.

"I know you wish the Queen and me so well," he told Sarah,

> that you would be glad that nothing should be done that might do either of us hurt. Therefore my opinion of the matter is that there can be no inconvenience in allowing Count Wratislaw's master to write to the Queen and ask her to consent for the doing of this and then to bring the letter to the Cabinet council.[1]

He added, "I am very clear in my own opinion that if anything of this be to be done, it will have a much better grace for me when the business of the war is over." The Emperor, however, on June 20 had signed a rescript instructing Wratislaw through his Minister in London, Hoffmann, to seek the sanction of the Queen. Harley as Secretary of State took him to Windsor at the end of July, when Hoffmann stated that Marlborough had replied that "his ambition was limited to the Queen's favours." Sarah, as Marlborough had foreseen, was even more opposed to this elevation than she had

[1] Coxe, i, 342.

been to the dukedom. To her titles were the toys of fools, and religion too often only the mask for hypocrites. Anne, disregarding Sarah's rather scornful smiles, gave her consent with evident pleasure, and there for the time the matter had rested.

But now after Blenheim there is a letter from Wratislaw to the Emperor of August 22.

> . . . Marlborough came to me yesterday and asked me to write that if you were still most graciously inclined to raise him to the rank of Prince of the Empire, he considers that after this victory would be the right time. It was also for Your Majesty to name what territory or title he should have and bear.[1]

In his recuperation of spiritual health the Emperor began to see difficulties which had not previously occurred to him in creating Marlborough a prince of the Empire. Where was he to find the land for a principality? The Imperial estates were none too large. How was he to procure a seat for this English soldier in the supreme Diet of the Reich? Such dignities and status ought not lightly to be bestowed upon new people. The Duke had certainly rendered distinguished service to the house of Hapsburg, and was besides, by all accounts, a man of good appearance and manners. Still, he was by birth only a small country gentleman in an island where even the highest nobility were said to be uncouth. True, as Emperor he himself had authorized Hoffmann to obtain the sanction of Queen Anne for such a reward, and had allowed Wratislaw to press its acceptance upon Marlborough. But he had, he confessed to himself, at that time been gravely harassed by the public dangers, and had hardly been able to measure so great a departure from custom with the precision which was incumbent upon him. However, he felt personally committed at least to the honorific grant, and trusted that, if promptly made, it might suffice. He wrote back on August 28 a most gracious letter to Marlborough, addressing him as "Most Illustrious Cousin and most dear Prince."

> I do with pleasure salute by these titles Your Dilection, whom I have freely and of my own accord admitted among the Princes of the Holy Roman Empire, not so much in consideration of your noble Family, as upon account of your Personal Merit, and your great Deserts towards me, my August House, and the Holy Roman Empire. I have desired that this public monument of honour, the greatest there is in Germany, which I have so justly conferred on you should remain. . . .

[1] *Feldzüge*, vi, 866.

> These victories are so great, especially that near Höchstädt, past ages never having seen the like victory obtained over the French. . . .[1]

But Marlborough had no mind to be treated in this way. He wanted no empty title. He must have the principality and the vote. Without these the honour would become a source of merriment in every Court. He made all this plain in due course.

Marlborough to Godolphin

WEISSEMBERG
September 22

> Two days ago the count de Wratislaw gave me a letter from the emperor, in which he acquaints me with having made me a prince of the empire. I am very much surprised, and so I told him, that such a step should be taken before I had the least notice. Besides, this was not the method in which it ought to be done, for the notice ought to be sent to the several princes of the empire; and the lands from whence I was to take my title to be named to them; for that I could not have a seat in the diet till I was master of an imperial fief in the empire. He said it was right, and that he would write to the emperor, and not own to any body that he has given me the letter. However, I send you a copy, but desire nobody may see it but Mr Secretary; for I believe the emperor must write another to me.[2]

Wratislaw's correspondence with the Emperor upon this topic is instructive and diverting. Through it we can see the suave, steady pressure which was put upon him by Marlborough, who all the time in his letters to Godolphin and Sarah was representing himself almost as the victim of inappropriate rewards. After dwelling on he services which the Duke had rendered, to which he bluntly declared the salvation of the Imperial throne was due, Wratislaw wrote, "This man will be indispensable to your Majesty for many years to come. It would be the greatest error in State policy to offend him." The lands must be found and the seat and vote in the Diet must be presented to the princes as an irrevocable decision. The lack of precedent would in itself make the compliment adequate to the action. "I can assure your Majesty," wrote the sagacious, if cynical, Envoy, "that King Louis XIV would gladly give this man the finest province in France to have his aid." Thus pressed, the Emperor exerted himself to overcome the difficulties. Though nothing was settled for many months to come, an estate about

[1] Lediard, i, 419.

[2] Coxe, ii, 25.

fifteen miles square was eventually carved out from the Imperial lands in Swabia to form the principality of Mindelheim.[1]

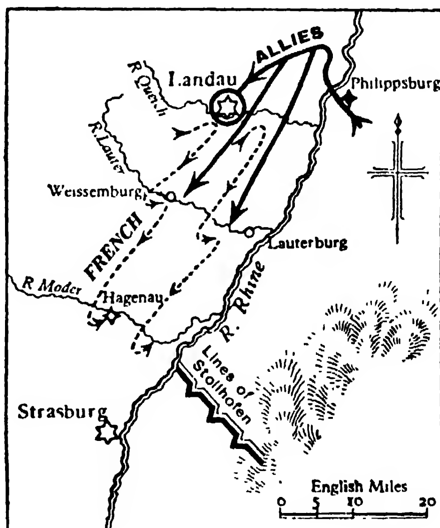
At the conference on August 25 the Margrave pronounced for the siege of Landau as an indispensable preliminary to any campaign on the Moselle. There was much to be said for this; the Germans were all set upon it, and Marlborough did not seriously resist them. He knew they would never be willing to run risks upon the Moselle till they had Landau again in their hands. The strategic value of the place is apparent, and its capture by the allies in 1702 and recapture by the French in 1703 made it a trophy. It was agreed to concentrate upon the Rhine by Philippsburg. General Thüngen, with the siege train and fifteen thousand men, was left to reduce Ulm. With him stayed Wratislaw to negotiate the neutrality of Bavaria; and Marlborough and Eugene tarried for a few days, hoping for a speedy result.

On August 25 the allied forces began their march for the Rhine. For the convenience of supply the three generals moved by separate routes through Würtemberg. The English and the Danes regained at Gross Heppach the road by which they had come, and on the 31st were overtaken at Mondelsheim by Marlborough. For a second time the redcoats were welcomed in these German towns, and surely they might feel that this time the tributes were deserved. In June they had come as rescuers: in August they returned as victors. They had certainly made good their untactful promise "to lend spirit to the Empire and spurs to the French." Joy, gratitude, and jubilation hailed their homeward path. But little more than half of them were there to tread it.

The concentration of the allies along the Rhine in the Philippsburg area was effected smoothly and punctually. Marlborough and Eugene arrived together, and the Margrave a few days later. Eugene had collected all the troops which had hitherto guarded the Lines of Stollhofen. At this stage it was only the enemy who would have need of defensive systems. The open field belonged to the allies. Marlborough summoned the heavy artillery furnished by the Landgrave of Hesse, which he had been forced to leave at Mannheim and had used as a feint on his original march. The total strength of the confederates on the Upper Rhine now amounted to 92 battalions and 181 squadrons. At this late period in the campaign all the units on

[1] Klopp devotes twice as much space to this example of Marlborough's pettiness as to the battle of Blenheim.

both sides were much reduced in numbers. "Above one half of our battalions," wrote Marlborough (September 8) to Godolphin, "are extremely weak, so that if we come to action I intend to make the fourteen English battalions but seven, and to do the same thing to the Danes and Hessians, which will bring our battalions to seventy-eight." The numerical and moral superiority of the confederates was, however, not disputable. During the 6th, 7th, and 8th, after personal reconnaissances by Marlborough and Eugene, the army crossed the two floating bridges which had been thrown by Philippsburg, and drew out on a seven-mile front before the Queich river, along which lay the French main forces.



VILLEROY ABANDONS LANDAU

Louis XIV behaved with fortitude and dignity in the hour of misfortune. He made no reproaches and uttered no lamentations. He warmly commended Marshal Villeroy for spontaneously going to the relief of Marsin. He approved Marsin's conduct and comforted him. He wrote magnanimously to the Elector, declaring that he felt more sorrow for that unlucky prince than for his own troubles. His only comment upon Tallard was "I grieve for Marshal Tallard, and I feel deeply his pain at the loss of his son." Upon the military situation his outlook was broad. He wished indeed that the campaign were at an end. But worse must be expected from the strength and elation of the enemy. A defensive was imposed upon the northern French armies till the longed-for day of winter quarters arrived. Meanwhile the strength of the confederate forces was plainly gathering about Philippsburg, and the report was received that Marlborough in great strength was marching thither with winged foot-steps (*à tire-d'aile*). In the midst of this Marsin had hurt his leg and was laid up at Strasburg. Villeroy had himself to hasten with every available man to the defence of the Queich. Here he

fortified all the crossings with entrenchments and palisades. By extreme efforts enough troops were gathered to raise his army to upward of 85 battalions and 112 squadrons, which seemed adequate to hold so good a position. But the after-effects of Blenheim were destructive to all these expectations.

Early on September 9 Marlborough, Eugene, and the Margrave marched south against the Queich with all their forces in battle array, resolved to force the passages by general battle on the following day. Villeroy felt himself unequal, in the despondent mood of the army, by which he was himself affected, to meet the attack. He ordered a retreat of twenty miles to the next tributary of the Rhine, the Lauter. The alacrity with which this command was obeyed exposed to the confederates the remarkable disorder of the French. Marlborough followed them with the united army, and Villeroy thereupon retired another twenty miles to Hagenau and the line of the Moder. The Duke, to whom another battle would have been most welcome, was both disappointed and surprised by the Marshal's timidity. "If they had not been the most frightened people in the world," he wrote to Godolphin, "they would never have quitted these two posts [positions]." "I should never have believed," wrote Chamillart to Marsin on September 19,

> that the consequences of the day of Höchstädt would be so disastrous as they now show themselves to be; so much so that now, only a month later, the enemy terrify Alsace and have it in their own choice to besiege this place or that, as they judge proper. This change is very perturbing and alarming for those unaccustomed to such great upheavals. God grant that we get out of it at no greater cost than we have already borne.[1]

Landau was now isolated and exposed. The Margrave undertook the siege, and Marlborough and Eugene covered him along the Lauter. For greater convenience in supply one of the floating bridges at Philippsburg was towed upstream, and established close behind the junction of the Queich and the Rhine. The fortress of Landau contained a garrison and nine battalions under a resolute governor, Laubanie, and before retreating Villeroy had thrown into it a mass of munitions and twelve months' victuals. In the preceding year it had yielded to a French siege in thirty days, and it was therefore hoped that the same allowance would now be sufficient. If so there would still be time for Marlborough to develop his

[1] Röder, ii, 85.

projects upon the Moselle. But the Imperial army was found deficient in all the apparatus of a first-class siege. It was said of them that they "undertake sieges without cannon, ammunition or engineers with as much assurance as they did a war without money, credit or troops."[1] Besides this a singular lethargy seemed to have overcome the Margrave, whose foot, bruised at the Schellenberg, had begun to trouble him; and the progress of the works was judged by all observers to be unaccountably and unwarrantably slow.

The King of the Romans, an agreeable youth inspired by the keenest admiration for Marlborough, now arrived in great state from Vienna to take nominal command of the operations. Although this was a formality, it aggravated the Margrave's already festering internal griefs. He saw, with an irritation he scarcely troubled to conceal, that his reputation was eclipsed by the glory of Marlborough and Eugene. He had been kept out of Blenheim; he had been recalled from Ingolstadt; and now an obsequious world would ascribe the honours of the capture of Landau to the heir to the Imperial throne. As the poet fulsomely sang of the young King:

> What tides of Glory to his Bosom ran,
> Clasped in th' Embraces of the GODLIKE MAN.

The Margrave could hardly be expected to see Marlborough in so rosy a light. He resented both the domination and the bland dissembling of the English upstart, whom he conceived he had saved from disaster at the Schellenberg, and who had shown no gratitude even for that. Well, let him wait upon the siege, and wait also for his preposterous campaign on the Moselle. Imagine opening new operations at this season of the year! Was the man's ambition insatiable? Thus, we suppose, not without much evidence, did the Margrave chew his bitter cud.

General Thüngen's batteries had opened upon Ulm on September 8. The governor beat the chamade on the 10th, and the next day was allowed to march out with the honours of war. The Bavarians dispersed to their homes. Sickness and desertion were such that only nine hundred Frenchmen reached the Rhine. A great supply of munitions, including two hundred and fifty cannon and twelve hundred barrels of powder, fell to the captors; and the whole attacking force, with its much-needed siege train, set out for the Rhine and Landau.

[1] Cowper Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 48.

John to Sarah

WEISSEMBOURG
Sept. 15, 1704

*I had sealed my letter to you before I received the express of Ulm's being surrendered, which place is of very great consequence, for whilst we have it the French will never think of returning into that country, and besides it helps us to 20 regiments of foot, and as many of horse, for the better carrying on of the siege of Landau. I have had millions of letters from all parts of the world since this battle, but having heard nothing from 21 [?] and 146 [?], I should be glad to know if they are in London. I am going with Prince Eugene to dine with Prince Louis, in order to press him to open the trenches; for should this siege last long it would make it very difficult for me to execute what I have very much at my heart which is taking winter quarters on the Moselle; for I think that would put the Allies in a condition of opening the next campaign with great advantage; and 'tho I wish from my soul to stay at home with you, I should be glad to take any pains that might make it easy to my successor to succeed against France. . . .

John to Sarah

WEISSEMBOURG
Octr. 6, 1704

*I did intend to have gone to Landau yesterday, but the weather being ill, and the Army being in some difficulty for forage, I put off my going till to-morrow. The great mind I have to put the Army into winter quarters that I might think of coming to my dear soul, makes me believe the siege of Landau goes on very slowly. The duke Regent of Wirtemberg has given me eight horses and a callash, which I have not seen, but by the description I believe you will like it. I have ordered them into Holland, and if you please it shall be brought to England with me; for I have already here two sets of coach horses which will not be proper for England.

Marlborough's health, never robust, was seriously affected by the stresses through which he had passed. His shining armour of serenity was heavy to wear. Within was a highly sensitive nervous organism whose concealed fires consumed itself. In his hours of depression he longed to resign his command, and wrote to Sarah almost as if his retirement were already arranged. Though prolonged intense strain did not exhaust his impulse, it deranged his system. A sense of pressure in the head followed what he calls "the heating of his blood." Two days after Blenheim he had had to be bled. This now-discredited old-world remedy always seems to have relieved him. "Ever since the battle," he wrote to Godolphin (August 17),

"I have been so employed about our own wounded men and the prisoners, that I have not one hour's quiet, which has so disordered me, that if I were in London I should be in my bed in a high fever."

And again (August 23):

> I am suffered to have so little to myself that I have a continual fever on my spirits, which makes me very weak; but when I go from hence, I am resolved to go in my coach till I come to the Rhine, which I do not doubt will restore me to perfect health. Nothing but my zeal for her majesty's service could have enabled me to have gone through the fatigues I have had for the last three months; and I am but too sure when I shall have the happiness of seeing you, you will find me ten years older than when I left England. I do not say this to complain, for I esteem myself very happy if I can make any return for her majesty's goodness to me and mine.[1]

In the middle of September he was "so uneasy with a cold fit of an ague" that he could neither read Godolphin's letter nor write in reply.

On October 10 to Sarah:

> For thousands of reasons I wish myself with you. Besides I think if I were with you quietly at the lodge, I should have moıe health, for I am at this time so very lean, that it is extreme uneasy to me, so that your care must nurse me this winter, or I shall certainly be in a consumption. I am very sorry to hear you have so often returns of your illness, and I do with all my heart thank you for the resolution you have taken of letting the physicians try to cure you, which I hope in God they will, and that you may live many years after me, which both by my age and constitution you must do.[2]

Sarah was distressed by her husband's accounts of his health. She evidently urged him to wind up the campaign and come home. When could there be a better moment than after so great a victory? Godolphin too was insistent. Parliament was meeting. The Captain-General's presence was necessary in England to use the full political effect of his success while all were dazzled by it. The advantage of his return was not lost upon the practised statesman. The sound maxim, "Leave off a winner," occurred to the gambler of Newmarket and the Whitehall card-tables. Why worry about Landau, and still more about the Moselle? Enough had been done for the Germans. Let them go into winter quarters, as, indeed, they desired. Embark the Queen's troops at some handy place, and let

[1] Coxe, ii, 27. [2] *Ibid.*, 28.

the Rhine current bear them swiftly and easily back to Holland. Godolphin wrote to Harley:

> I am not very easy at their being so far engaged in the siege of Landau at this time of year; it may draw into length, and delay the Duke of Marlborough's coming over. Besides that, it may expose him to new hazards. All these, in my opinion, had been better prevented, and the Empire might have been contented with seeing the French gone back over the Rhine.
>
> The fears of France, as well as the desires of Holland, were that he should have brought his army down the Rhine in boats; and I must own, that for my own part I should have liked that measure better; *but I can believe in him* [*Marlborough*] *against my own senses.*[1]

To Godolphin's counsels Sarah artfully added descriptions of the improvements at Holywell which she knew would tempt the absent soldier, and, in no mood of spiteful gossip, but in pursuance of her strong, logical politics, she now began to play upon him in his tenderest spot. When he felt he had done well, he longed for the appreciation of his countrymen, and especially of those who had doubted or opposed him. He might justly hope that what had happened in Germany would soften their rage against him, or at least leave them confounded in argument. Evidence to the contrary wounded him deeply. Sarah therefore darkened her letters with the vicious comments of the Tory Opposition. His replies show that she wrote out for him the most disparaging, damaging, and mischievous criticisms which she heard; and she was a good judge of these. She was resolved to make a breach between him and the Tories.

John bared his breast to these assaults. His reaction was magnificent. On August 25 he wrote:

> I find by some of yours that I am very much obliged to 22 [probably Lord Rochester] and some of his friends, that take the action of Donauwörth [the Schellenberg] not to be a victory. I wish that and our last battle could have been obtained without the hazard of any but myself; his lordship then would not have complained. For this last action I will be answerable his friend the King of France will own the victory. It is not to be imagined with what precipitation they have quitted this country.[2]

GROSS-GARTACH
Sept. 2

> . . . I am sure we can never bless God enough for the success he has given us, it being much above our own expectations. But if those sort

[1] Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, i, 61.
[2] Coxe, ii, 43.

of gentlemen think there has not been enough done, I hope He will bless us with a farther success, which at last must bring us to happiness in spite of them, which shall be the prayers and endeavours of him that loves you dearly.[1]

Sarah had passed on an Opposition sneer about Blenheim: "It was true a great many men were killed or taken, but that to the French King was no more than to take a bucket of water out of a river." John replied:

> What 92 [unknown] says of a bucket of water; if they will allow us to draw one or two such buckets more, I should think we might then let the river run quietly, and not much apprehend its overflowing and destroying its neighbours, or be much concerned whether 17 [Nottingham] or 21 [?] were in or out of humour.[2]

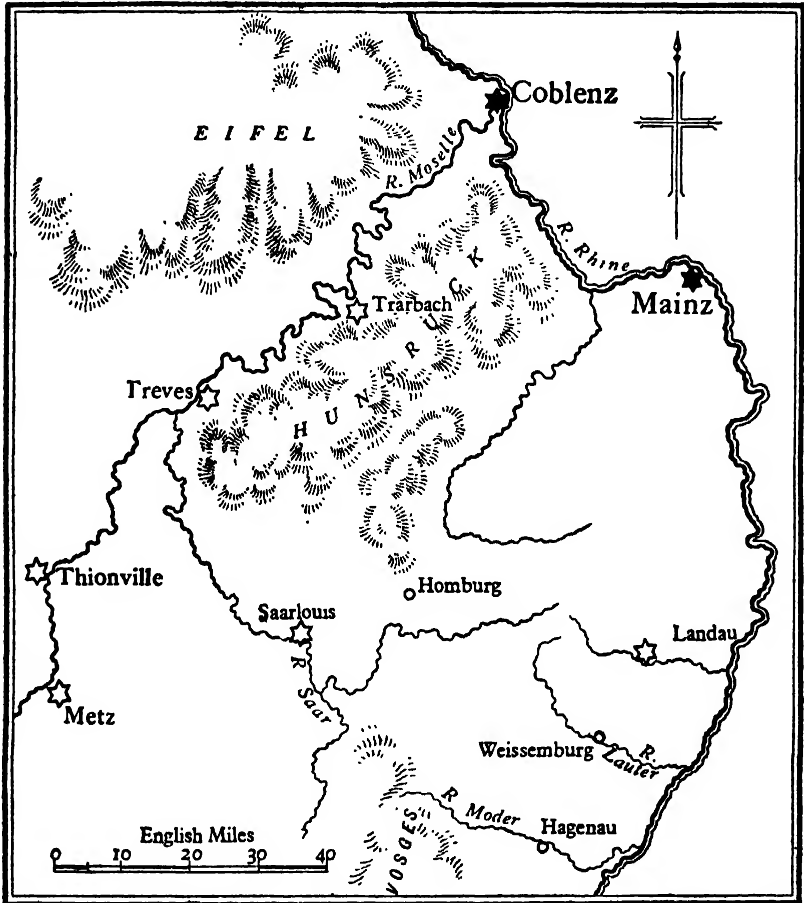
On October 20, in the last thrust of the campaign, Sarah extorted from him a justly famous letter:

> I do assure you as for myself, my pretending to be of no party is not designed to get favour, or to deceive anybody, for I am very little concerned what any party thinks of me; I know them both so well that if my quiet depended upon either of them, I should be most miserable, as I find happiness is not to be had in this world, which I did flatter myself might have been enjoyed in a retired life. *I will endeavour to leave a good name behind me in countries that have hardly any blessing but that of not knowing the detested names of whig and tory.*[3]

But side by side with all this despondency, physical and political—the shadow of brilliant success—a supreme desire to bring the war to a victorious end by the surest and speediest means possessed the general who was constantly accused of prolonging it for his own advantage. After the capture of Gibraltar and the battle of Malaga the combined Anglo-Dutch fleet might well control the Mediterranean. By this means the Italian front could be effectually restored to an activity which would exact exhaustive efforts from the French. For this purpose the Duke of Savoy must be strongly reinforced, both overland from the Empire and from the sea, by troops and naval action. The highest possible pressure must similarly be exerted along the front in Flanders. With these two wings rigorously engaging the enemy's strength, the conditions would be created for the main advance of the confederate centre by Thionville and Metz towards Paris. An army of a hundred thousand men must be concentrated on the Moselle, based principally on Coblenz, at the very

[1] Coxe, ii, 43. [2] *Ibid.*, 44. [3] *Ibid.*, 45.

opening of the new campaign. He must have forty thousand Germans, twenty thousand Dutch, and his own forty thousand in the Queen's pay ready to take the field by April, so as to have the full year's fighting before him and reach the result. Considerable



THE MOSELLE PATH OF INVASION

forces must winter upon the Moselle, with the command of the river behind them. He must have Trarbach; he must have Trèves, and he must have Saarlouis. This structure of fortresses and magazines, held in force during the winter and filled continually with supplies, would be the foundation from which he could move in the spring as the first step upon Thionville. There was no surprising novelty in

such a conception. In fact, so far as the Moselle was concerned, it was the plan which the Margrave had proposed at the end of 1703. But for the first time the rescue of the Empire and the ascendancy, as might have been hoped, of one mind in the allied war direction, together with the injury which France had received in 1704, the improved balance of forces, and the command of the Mediterranean, had made it feasible.

For this end every effort must be made. This was no time for triumph or repose. Was the war to drag on in costly, bloody gnawings around the frontiers of France until perhaps it died down in disastrous futility, until the Alliance, reforged on the anvil of Blenheim, broke again to pieces? For a thrust at the heart, the chance, the means, the time, and—might he not feel?—the man had now come. Beyond the battle-smoke of a terrible year he saw peace rising out of an otherwise endless warfare, and order emerging from chaos, with England the glorious deliverer at the summit.

On September 19 Louis XIV wrote a very fine and discerning letter to Villeroy. The Marshal had been much disquieted by the silence which his master had observed upon his hurried abandonment of the lines on the Queich and Lauter. This had lasted for no less than ten days. It must have been with relief that he read the generous, cheering message which reached him probably upon September 21.

> Raise yourself above the talk of the public. Do not look upon yourself as the victim of Höchstädt day. You have done your duty as a true man. You have taken the steps which you thought best for my interest. In disregard of a false pride which would have been ill-founded, you have been more concerned in preserving my army and my State than with your personal reputation. Nothing could convince me more of your devotion to me.[1]

The next day the King showed that he and his experts had penetrated Marlborough's future designs.

> I have reason to believe . . . four battalions are being sent from Overkirk's army to the Moselle. . . . It looks very much as if Monsieur de Marlborough will send at the same time cavalry, and perhaps even infantry to strengthen this corps to occupy Trèves if they can, and even to attack Trarbach in order to develop their plan and besiege Thionville at the beginning of the next campaign.[2]

[1] Pelet, iv, 638. [2] *Ibid.*, 639.

This warning was written from Versailles on September 20, and it exactly embodied Marlborough's intentions.

We may be sure that Villeroy pondered deeply upon it. He had long conferences with Marsin, who lay crippled in Strasburg. Both Marshals decided that Marlborough would not be able to attack the Moselle before Landau had fallen, and all the troops fastened around it were released. They were therefore content to strengthen M. de Coigny, who commanded in the Moselle valley, to about three thousand horse, composed of their weakest squadrons. They must after all contemplate, at least as a possibility, that they would perhaps themselves be the objects of a major attack as soon as the fortress was taken. They could not tell what was happening at Landau, from which they were quite cut off.

The siege dragged on. "Our people," wrote Marlborough to Harley on October 6, "are advancing by the sap [*i.e.*, by sapping], in order to make a lodgment on the counterscarp. This method may save a few men, but will cost the more time, and, it may be, a great many more men in the end by sickness."[1] The cavalry captain Pope, writing a month later, expressed the common talk of the English regiments.

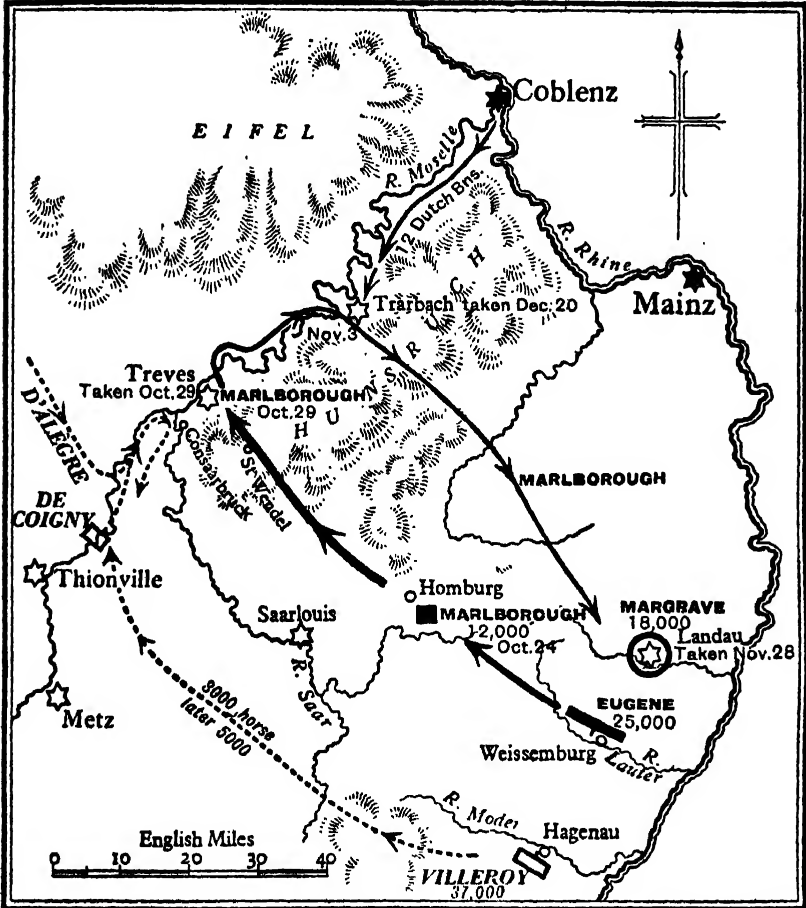
> The Prince of Baden is now sufficiently revenged for our robbing him of a share of the glory of the victory of Blenheim. He has spun out this siege till the left wing of the horse, to which that action was chiefly owing, is entirely ruined. We have not above twenty horses a troop left.[2]

At length Marlborough could watch this process no longer. It was not in his power to coerce or remove the Margrave. He determined to make a personal effort of his own. He was fairly sure the Marshals would not expect him to quit the main army before the capitulation of Landau. He therefore began from October 13 onward to build up secretly a force at Homburg, thirty-five miles to the westward. The defences of this place, as we have seen, had been recently dismantled by the French; and to Villeroy its occupation and repair might seem to be a natural precaution for the right flank of the confederate army covering the siege of Landau. On the 19th the Duke sent Colonel Blood with fourteen guns and four howitzers, escorted by 3 battalions, to this strong post. Twenty-two battalions marched thither on the 20th, 48 squadrons on the 21st, and he himself joined them on the 24th. This little army in its shrunken state

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 497. [2] November 8; Cowper Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 51.

amounted to twelve thousand men, but all lively. Eugene agreed to be left on the Lauter with no more than twenty-five thousand men against Villeroy, twenty-seven miles away, with forty thousand.

On the 25th the Duke plunged into the wild Hunsrüch mountain



MARLBOROUGH SECURES THE MOSELLE

region. In those days when roads were but tracks, and scarcely a dwelling pleaded with primeval solitudes, the march seemed forlorn and sombre to the troops. Marlborough with the horse reached St Wendel at the head of the passes on the 26th. But it was only with a hard struggle that the foot traversed the twenty miles in three days. He had to wait at St Wendel till they came up.

He could not tell how many French he would find in the valley of the Moselle. His usually excellent information reported ten thousand reinforcements approaching Trèves, but there might be more. In his tent at St Wendel on October 26, while waiting for the rest of his force, he wrote several letters which lay bare his feelings and position with an attractive air of detachment. He was coming into contact with the unknown. He could receive no help. He was "very unwilling to be beaten at the end of this campaign," but he had not dared entrust this expedition, which might so easily miscarry, to any subordinate. No retreat was possible. Unless he could establish himself upon the Moselle and gather the Dutch troops now coming from Coblenz, he must "throw his cannon into some river"; for back they could never go. As when he marched out two years before on the heaths of Peer expecting to fight his first great battle, he seems to have wished to leave some record behind of his thoughts and reasonings.

John to Sarah

CAMP AT ST WENDEL
October 26

I am got thus far in my way to the Moselle, after having marched through very terrible mountains. Had we any rain it would have been impossible to have got forward the cannon; and it is certain if the enemy are able to hinder us from taking winter quarters in this country [*i.e.*, on the Moselle], we must throw our cannon into some river, for to carry them back is impossible. I have been so desirous to make use of this fair weather, that I am here only with the horse; but as my march to-morrow will bring me within eight leagues of Trèves, and the enemy's troops being but five leagues from me, I must be obliged to stay for the foot, which will join me the next day.

This march and my own spleen have given me occasion to think how very unaccountable a creature man is, to be seeking for honour in so barren a country as this, when he is very sure that the greater part of mankind, and may justly fear that even his best friends, would be apt to think ill of him, should he have ill success. But I am endeavouring all I can to persuade myself that my happiness ought to depend upon my knowledge that I do what I think is for the best. If I can succeed in the taking of Trèves, I shall not then stay above ten days longer in this country; for when I shall have given the necessary orders for the siege of Trarbach, I shall leave the execution of it to the Prince of Hesse, having promised the King of the Romans to be with him before the siege of Landau is ended.[1]

All went well. "We have had," wrote Cardonnel, who lost all

[1] Coxe, ii, 33

his kit and baggage by a fire, "a most horrible march hither day and night, but I thank God it has had all the success we could desire."[1] Villeroy was not sure of Marlborough's movements till the 26th. He dispatched d'Alègre, a capable officer (Coigny having succumbed), with a reinforcement of five thousand men. They were within six miles of Trèves when Marlborough's vanguard, urged on by appeals from the inhabitants, came within sight of the ancient city. The handful of French in the fort fled without having time to burn the place as Marlborough, judging by his own severities in Bavaria, feared and expected. Instead of being a French fortress held by a skeleton force, Trèves now became a well-garrisoned confederate stronghold. Six thousand peasants were set to work night and day to repair the extensive but ruined fortifications, and they were covered by Marlborough's cavalry at Consaarbrück. The seizure and fortification of Trèves left the much more strongly defended fortress of Trarbach isolated and open to attack. The twelve Dutch battalions had now arrived from Holland. Marlborough could entrust the siege to the Prince of Hesse. He had to abandon his hopes of taking Saarlouis. Having neither the time nor the strength for this, he returned with his staff to Landau, the King of the Romans, and the Margrave. The campaign was now drained to the very dregs. Landau was not taken till November 28, and even so the garrison marched out under the honours of war. Laubanie, although blinded at the outset by a bomb, had made a fine defence of more than seventy days. The Margrave had to ascribe what there was of credit to the King of the Romans.

This winter effort of Marlborough's will-power deserves admiration. The whole feeling of the armies after Blenheim was that they had done their part for the year. Their commanders longed to parade their laurels before their countrymen, and to receive the tributes they had so well deserved. But Marlborough was deaf to all appeals, even the most seductive. He yielded neither to success nor exhaustion. He was dominated by his theme, or, as might be said, his duty. He was driven forward against longings for home and bodily discomfort by an overriding desire to achieve his purpose. His physical symptoms did not reduce his continuous output of hard work and thrustful energy, and ever he set himself new tasks and dared new hazards in his thorough, painstaking way. It is these moral and soldierly virtues which made Marlborough the greatest servant, who remained a servant, of any sovereign in history.

[1] Cardonnel to Watkins, Trèves, October 30; Add. MSS., 42176.

Chapter Twenty-three

THE CONQUERING HERO

1704–5—WINTER

THE labours of the year were not over. The campaign of 1705 which might end the war could not be fought without the vigorous and punctual aid of Prussia and the German states. The only chance of obtaining this was that the hero of Blenheim, now the cynosure of Europe, should in person visit the Courts of Prussia and Hanover. He was utterly weary. He wrote to Godolphin from Weissemburg:

> I think to begin my journey on Friday or Saturday next. I own that my heart aches at the thought of it, since I shall be forced to go above eight hundred miles before I get to The Hague, in the very worst time of the year; and, that which is worst of all, with very little hopes of succeeding.[1]

Eight hundred miles in the lumbering coach with its six horses and cavalry escort, splashing along the uneven roads in the depth of winter, interspersed by arduous ceremonial, by official festivities, and by intricate negotiations, before he could even reach The Hague and wait for a fair wind! "The ways have been so bad," he wrote to Sarah from Berlin (November 23), "I have been obliged to be every day 14 or 15 hours on the road, which makes my side very sore; but three or four days I shall stay here will make me able to go on."[2] He had a great welcome in Berlin. He was treated as the Prince he now was, and gazed upon as a marvel. The King was gratified by his visit, and by his tributes to the bravery of the Prussian troops.

But Marlborough's task was one from which, as he approached it, anyone might have recoiled. The northern war had entered upon an extraordinary phase. In their fear of Prussian domination both the Czar and the King of Saxony had adopted the most desperate expedient open to statecraft. They had deliberately courted defeat at the hands of Charles XII so as to bring Prussia and Sweden face

[1] November 10; Coxe, ii, 59 [2] *Ibid.*, 61.

to face. Only a fortnight before Marlborough's arrival reinforcements were kept back from the Saxon and Russian armies. Charles XII had won his victory at Punitz, and Poland lay open to the Swedes. Should Prussia intervene? This was the paramount question in Berlin. The Prussian army was being rapidly recruited and enlarged. Upon what fields would it seek fame and booty? Patkul, the Livonian weaver of anti-Swedish coalitions, had hastened secretly to Berlin at the first news of Marlborough's impending visit.

It was Marlborough's aim to prevent this vast extension of the northern war, which by diverting German energies would so seriously aid Louis XIV; and also to secure a large additional contingent of the Prussian Army to fight against France in Italy. No wonder he thought it an unhopeful quest. The language which he was authorized to use was hard. The best account of his discourse is given in Frederick I's letter to August II, in which the Elector-King states that Marlborough went so far as to intimate that if Prussia stirred up this new trouble she would "*be dealt with as Denmark had been in 1700,*" when the English fleet had carried the Swedish Army to the neighbourhood of Copenhagen. To prevent such an ugly out-turn, Marlborough urged the Elector-King either to disband his newly recruited troops or transfer them to the Grand Alliance on favourable terms.

The rigour of such discussions must be apparent, and Marlborough had need to supplement the prestige which Blenheim had given to the Maritime Powers with all his commanding personal address and compulsive charm; and this was the easier since the Elector-King and the General conversed easily in French. It was fortunate that Frederick I was already disgusted by the vacillations and suspected bad faith of the Elector of Saxony. Marlborough caught Frederick I and his Ministers at a most timely moment, when they were already cooling from the projected triple alliance against the formidable Swede, and when the troops that had been raised in that intention might become superfluous. The Elector-King therefore hearkened to a voice which offered threats and bribes with equal smoothness, and set himself to make upon the best terms a bargain for farming out a part of the desirable Prussian Army. After his conversations with the King Marlborough was presented with proposals in fifteen articles. Declaring that these dealt with matters beyond the sphere in which he could presume to meddle, he would reply only in general terms. Nevertheless three days later he

concluded in the Queen's name a treaty, to which he undertook that the States-General and the Empire would accede, whereby eight thousand Prussians would forthwith march to Piedmont to the help of the Duke of Savoy in return for an annual subsidy of two hundred thousand thalers from England, one hundred thousand from Holland, and bread-rations from the Empire.

John to Sarah

BERLIN
Nov. 27

I have been forced to stay here three days longer than I intended; but at last I have finished so far, that they have promised to sign the treaty for 8000 men for the duke of Savoy at 12 o'clock this day, at which time I shall have my coach ready; but shall not be able to get to Hanover till Monday night, and hope to finish what I have to do there by Wednesday night, so that I may set forward to Holland on Thursday. I am very well contented at the pains I have taken in coming hither, since it has obtained 8000 men for the speedy relief of the duke of Savoy, this being the only prince of the empire in condition to send any men. I hope Holland as well as her majesty will approve of what I have done, it being the only thing that in probability can save Savoy. It is not to be expressed the civilities and honours they have done me here, the ministers assuring me that no other body could have prevailed with the king. My next will be from Hanover, and then you must not expect to hear from me till I come to Holland.[1]

He set out from Berlin in a blaze of goodwill, with results far beyond his expectations or those of the Government he served. He had been greatly favoured, we now know, by unforeseeable events. But the effect produced upon the Courts of Europe was as if a magic wand waved in Berlin had changed the policy of the Prussian King, prevented the spread of the northern war, and turned the sharpened bayonets of Prussia from the shores of the Baltic to those of the Mediterranean. Without this succour the Italian front against France could not have been sustained during the year 1705. But Marlborough also deeply interested the King in his schemes along the Moselle. He carried away with him the King's gift of "a hat with a diamond button and loop and a diamond hatband valued at between twenty and thirty thousand crowns and two fine saddle-horses with rich furniture."[2]

The compliments and courtesies of Berlin were repeated in Hanover. He was received with the greatest honour. Here he trod

[1] Coxe, ii, 62.

[2] Lediard, i, 464.

the delicate ground of the succession to the British Crown, and he well knew that every step would be jealously scrutinized by both the great English parties and by Queen Anne. The Electress Sophia was now decidedly disposed to receiving an invitation to visit London. Marlborough knew that the Queen would resist and resent this while she had breath in her body. Therefore upon the main point he must chill the enthusiasm of his hosts. Instructed gossip at Versailles had spread about the rumour that the object of his visit was to prepare the way for the marriage of his youngest daughter with the Electoral Prince, afterwards King George II. Not only was there no foundation for this except the natural mischief-making of the enemy, but Marlborough must have known that the affections of the Electoral Prince were at this time being strongly directed by his grandmother, the Electress of Sophia, towards the charming and gifted Caroline of Anspach, afterwards Queen 'Caroline the Illustrious,' and that their courtship had already begun.

The pre-eminent figure at the Court of Hanover in those days was Leibnitz, the philosopher-mathematician, discoverer or inventor of the differential calculus. He was the honoured friend of the Electress, and his voluminous writings throw many intimate gleams upon the personages and thoughts of the Hanoverian circle. The historian Klopp, who in his own day faithfully served the last King of Hanover, also writes agreeably about this visit. He says:

> Marlborough for his part developed all the dazzling aspects of his personality. He showed towards the Electress a deference which surpassed all the customary forms of the German Courts. He refused to sit down in her presence even at a ball. The Electress invited him to take part in a game (of cards) so as to force him to sit down. In accordance with the English court custom he knelt and kissed her hand.

This procedure proved irresistible to the vigorous old lady whose homely candour and common sense had made her respected throughout Europe. She was at first prejudiced against Marlborough. We have seen her disparaging reference to "the great general Marlborough" in her letter to Leibnitz about the Schellenberg. Blenheim had effaced these impressions, and contact with Marlborough transformed them. "Never," she wrote, "have I become acquainted with a man who knows how to move so easily, so freely, and so courteously. He is as skilled as a courtier as he is a brave general."[1] This comment travelled far.

[1] Leibnitz, *Werke* (1873), ix, 112.

Their conversation turned, of course, upon the Occasional Conformity Bill. Parliament had now met, and the progress of this measure was watched as narrowly and as anxiously in Europe as the movements of a most important army. Praiseworthy efforts were made by all the Courts, friendly and hostile, to understand why there was all this ferment in England about it, and what forces or causes the cryptic names of 'Tory' and 'Whig' meant. The nearest guess was that they stood for Anglican and Presbyterian. Marlborough did not attempt to explain the real differences. But he now declared himself plainly opposed to the Occasional Conformity Bill. This gave so much pleasure to the Electress Sophia that she seems to have accepted without demur the intimation which he gradually conveyed that she ran no risk of being invited to England by Queen Anne. She declared him as sensible in politics as pleasant in manner, and presented him with a piece of tapestry. To this the reigning prince added a jewel reputed to be worth twenty-five thousand thalers, which we may be sure he accepted with grace and pleasure.

John to Sarah

HANOVER
Dec. 2, 1704

On my arrival here I found two of your dear letters, and could you know the true satisfaction I have when they are kind, you will ever make me happy. I shall go from hence on Thursday, so that on this day se'nnight I hope to write from The Hague, where I will make as little stay as the business will allow of. I have so much respect shewn me here that I have hardly time to write. The king of Prussia did me all the honour he could; and indeed I have met with more kindness and respect everywhere than I could have imagined. But by my letters from England I find that zeal and success is only [not even] capable of protecting me from the malice of villainous faction; so that if it were not for the great obligation I owe to the queen, nothing should persuade me evermore to stir out of England. We have the news here that Landau and Trarbach are taken, so that thanks be to God this campaign is ended, to the greatest advantage for the allies, that has been for a great while. I long extremely to be with you and the children, so that you may be sure I shall lose no time when the wind is fair.[1]

The city of Amsterdam had long been the focus of pro-French sentiment, and if its powerful magistracy had favoured Marlborough's appointment as Deputy Captain-General, it was, as we

[1] Coxe, ii, 63.

have seen, largely for the purpose of keeping the 'Royalist' office of War Lord in abeyance. But now the Amsterdammers wished to throw up their caps for Marlborough. They sent a special delegation to press him to visit their city, and received him with remarkable enthusiasm. On the 12th he reached The Hague. He had deceived the States-General; he had purloined a part of their army; he had carried it far from the frontiers of Holland. Many sturdy Dutchmen lay by the Danube and the Upper Rhine. But his judgment had been right. He had stemmed the tide of adverse war; he had reconstituted the Grand Alliance in all its parts; he had saved the Empire; he had broken the military prestige of France. He was indeed their protector, and a champion worthy to hold—as deputy, of course—the military office of the great Stadtholders. The Grand Pensionary and seven Deputies received him on behalf of the Republic. He was presented with a basin and ewer of solid gold. The assembly listened with profound respect to his account of the general situation. The States of Holland immediately endorsed his Berlin treaty. All rejoiced that they had him safely back. They hoped and prayed that he would never go so far, nor run such risks again. They exulted in the past; they remained blind to the future. They did not understand that the destinies of Holland might be enlarged or restricted according as they used or spurned their new opportunities. Amid their blessings Marlborough sailed from Rotterdam to England, having been absent eight months, during which he had moulded Europe in a form which was not broken till the French Revolution.

Parliament had opened on October 29/November 9. The Queen's Speech extolled the triumphs of the year, and appealed for unity at home and for renewed and even greater exertions abroad. It had been thought better by the Ministers to make no special reference to Blenheim or to the Duke of Marlborough, but to leave it to Parliament themselves to fix and assign the credit. Accordingly in the House of Commons the Tory Party demonstrated their strength by joining the victory by the Danube with the naval battle of Malaga, which was dear to them because of the pronounced Toryism of Admiral Rooke. In the Lords, however, unstinted praise was bestowed upon Marlborough and his troops. No reference was made to Malaga in the Peers' Address. In debate it was argued that to couple a severe but apparently indecisive cannonade between the fleets with the battle of Höchstädt was invidious and absurd. This criticism, though actually true, was put in a

way that did less than justice to the work of the Navy or its commander. The Whig influence in the Lords enabled them to set their party view of strategy against that asserted by the Tories in the Commons. "We can never enough admire your wisdom and courage," they said to the Queen, "in sending that seasonable and necessary assistance to the Empire, and we cannot too much commend the secrecy and bravery with which your orders were executed."[1] Thus the session opened in the full rigour of the party game, to which the episodes of the widening world-war offered an exciting accompaniment and a succession of opportunities for debate.

Tory politicians found the victory of Blenheim hard to welcome. Not only did it crown with success the policy of Continental enterprises, but it had been gained by a General, also a kind of Prime Minister, who was well known to be lukewarm, if not indeed by now actually hostile, to the Occasional Conformity Bill. No doubt the success of the British arms and the allied cause was desirable and even necessary, but the party disadvantages resulting therefrom were obvious. The Tories were therefore torn between their relief and a good deal of uncontrollable pride as Englishmen, and their annoyance as partisans. In fact, there was much truth in Sarah's caustic remark that one would think from their demeanour that "the battle of Höchstädt had been gained over the Church of England and not over the French." The Tory chagrin was, however, restrained not only by their patriotism, but by a lively sense of the joy of the nation.

The estimates for the year guaranteed the still more vigorous prosecution of the war by land and sea. The Army was to be enlarged to fifty thousand men for Flanders and ten thousand for Portugal, and to be fully recruited. The Navy was raised from forty to forty-five thousand seamen, including marines available for landing purposes. All the subsidies to allies and for the hiring of mercenary troops at the joint expense of the Maritime Powers were continued. The expense amounted to more than nine millions, three-quarters of which must be raised by taxation. The whole of this unprecedented supply was voted speedily and unanimously by the House of Commons.

Having thus discharged their unavoidable duty to their country, the Tory majority turned with relief to the serious realities of public life. On November 23 the Occasional Conformity Bill was reintroduced in the Commons and read a first time. And now the

[1] *Parliamentary History*, vi, 356.

ex-Ministers Rochester and Nottingham revealed their designs. Incomparably the greatest source of revenue was the Land Tax, which alone yielded upward of four million pounds. Availing themselves of the precedent which the Lords were held to have admitted in 1702 when they reluctantly deferred to the Queen's wishes upon the grant to her husband, the Tory chiefs now proposed to tack the Occasional Conformity Bill to the Land Tax. Thus the Lords would have to choose between submitting to an odious measure or plunging the whole supply for the fleets and armies into hopeless confusion. This was indeed a fight with ball cartridge. Harley in his dual capacity as Speaker and as Secretary of State was well fitted and placed to advise the Queen's anxious Ministers. Members of all parties had access to him, and he did not refuse his guidance. Indeed, it was afterwards alleged that, looking several moves ahead, he had himself suggested to the Tory leaders the possibility of using the 'tack' with the intention of thereby drawing them into a trap.

If this were so, his artfulness was rewarded. The Tory Party was solid upon the Bill; but the tack split them from top to bottom. A large proportion of their members were not prepared to carry party warfare to a point where it challenged their country's safety and the honour of its arms. On November 28 the tack was rejected by a strong combination of Whigs and moderate Tories. The Ministry acted unitedly together. The military members supported them. Lord Cutts, who as an Irish peer could be elected to the Commons, has left a record of his feelings in a letter to a friend in Holland.

> It is eight o'clock and I have just come from Parliament, where I have stayed until now without having eaten or drunk to-day. I have therefore only time to tell you that some persons have wanted to tack the Occasional Conformity Bill on to that relating to the Land Tax. We have had a great fight over that all day. I have spoken against it, without going into the merits of the Occasional Conformity Bill, and the assembly has listened to me with close attention. We won by a great majority, 251 to 134. That decision is of the utmost importance. For in the other event, if the proposal for tacking had been carried, the Money Bill would have been lost, the enmity between the two Houses would have become irreconcilable, and the Queen would have been forced to dissolve Parliament. The consequence of that would have been the collapse of the common cause against France.[1]

Untaught by this rebuff upon the tack, the embittered or devout Highflyers proceeded with the Bill, and it passed through the

[1] Klopp, xi, 330.

House of Commons by substantial majorities and reached the Lords in the last days of the year.

On December 14, in the midst of this furious party strife, Marlborough landed at Greenwich, and hastened to pay his duty to the Queen. He had brought with him to the Thames a shipload of thirty-six French officers of the highest distinction. At their head was Marshal Tallard; sixteen of them were generals; none was below the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He also deposited in the Tower all the standards and colours captured by his wing of the army at Blenheim.[1] The next day he repaired to the House of Lords, where he was solemnly thanked by the Lord Keeper in the name of the Peers. "Your Grace," said the Lord Keeper, "has not overthrown young, unskilful Generals, raw and undisciplined troops; but . . . has conquered the French and Bavarian armies; armies that were fully instructed in all the arts of war; select veteran troops, flushed with former victories, and commanded by Generals of great experience and bravery. . . .

"The Emperor is thereby relieved; the Empire itself freed from a dangerous Enemy, in the very bowels of it; the exorbitant power of France is checked, and, I hope, a happy step made towards reducing of that Monarch, within his due bounds, and securing the liberties of Europe.

"The honour of these glorious victories, great as they are (under the immediate blessing of Almighty God), is chiefly, if not alone, owing to Your Grace's conduct and valour.

"This is the unanimous voice of England, and all her Majesty's allies.

"This most honourable House is highly sensible of the great and signal services Your Grace has done her Majesty, this campaign, and of the immortal honour you have done the English Nation; and have commanded me to give you their thanks for the same."

Marlborough replied in three or four sentences. ". . . I must beg, on this occasion, to do right to all the officers and soldiers I had the honour of having under my command; next to the blessing of God, the good success of this campaign is owing to their extraordinary courage.

[1] The Dutch considered that a share of these trophies should have been assigned to them, and a committee of the States-General rebuked Hompesch for having handed over at the Duke's command the standards his squadrons had captured. But Marlborough as Commander-in-Chief claimed them all for himself and for England.

"I am very sure, it will be a great satisfaction, as well as encouragement to the whole army, to find their services so favourably accepted."[1]

He repeated this answer in somewhat different words to the Committee which tendered him the thanks of the House of Commons.

In the first days of the new year (January 3) all London crowded to a pageant the like of which England had never seen. A long procession of the household troops and footguards bore the captured standards and colours from the Tower to Westminster Hall amid the salutes of the 'great guns' and the cheers of the people. The thirty-four French standards were borne by the gentlemen of the Blues, and the hundred and twenty-eight French colours by the pikemen of the Guards. Through the city, down the Strand, along 'the Pall-Mall,' before St James's Palace, through St James's Mews, they marched into the Park, where two salvos of forty cannon were fired. Queen Anne had let it be known that she would see them pass, and did so from Lord Fitzharding's lodgings in the Palace. These banners of mighty France, that nation of twenty millions, whom men in middle age could remember as England's disdainful paymaster, were received and set up in Westminster Hall for all to see. But more significant than this well-organized ceremonial was the temper of the masses who lined the route or thronged behind the procession. The foreign Ambassadors, bred in countries where Court, nobles, and magnates counted for all, were struck by a manifestation of a national self-consciousness unique among the nations.[2] Here was a society which did not end with the powerful and the rich, which descended through every class of citizen down to the very poorest and most humble, all of whose hearts responded to the feeling that it was *their* victory, that *their* cause had triumphed, and that *their* England was growing great. Even while foreign observers cavilled with some reason that the London populace claimed for themselves a victory in which their troops had formed but a quarter of the army, they admired the integral force and comprehension of the vigorous islanders, who could quarrel so fiercely with one another and yet rejoice together in national glory.

Already, too, the City of London had risen upon the European scene as a financial and political entity. On January 6 the Lord Mayor and Aldermen entertained the Duke and his officers, together with Godolphin and the Queen's Ministers, at a banquet in the

[1] Lediard, i, 470.
[2] Klopp, xi, 343.

Goldsmiths' Hall. Marlborough rode in a royal carriage followed by a great train of other coaches containing the principal personages in the realm and the Ambassadors of all the allied and neutral states. Part of the expense of the new campaign was to be met by a sale of annuities yielding ten pounds a year for every hundred and fifty pounds of capital. Within two hours of the lists being opened the whole sum of nearly a million pounds, impressive in those days, was subscribed by large numbers of persons eager to prove their confidence in the national cause at $6\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. In all the world at this time nothing could compare with these strong beginnings of nationalism and public credit. The destruction of the Armada had preserved the life of Britain: the charge at Blenheim opened to her the gateways of the modern world.

The antagonisms of political forces in England had brought a cool element into the welcome to which the victorious General was treated: but this quality of independence and restraint in a sense enhanced its significance. For now these estates and parties, this complex society, laid aside for the moment their feuds in order to do him honour beyond what any absolute monarch could bestow. The applause, the admiration, the gratitude of equals has a ring more true and more comforting than the favour of a prince, however mighty, however gracious. It was common ground among the whole society which then expressed the English nation that some magnificent and unprecedented reward should be bestowed upon the Duke of Marlborough, and the only question was what form it should take. Lords and Commons, Whigs and Tories, divided in so much else, joined with the Sovereign and her Ministers in this quest. Various benevolent schemes were mooted. At first there was an idea of clearing a large space in London for a square to bear his name, to set up statues of him and of the Sovereign under whom he had conquered, and to build him besides a fine house overlooking the scene. The wary Godolphin saw objections, and wrote to the still more wary Harley:

> I am not fond of the proposal of two statues, one for the Queen and th'other for the Duke of Marlborough. What merit soever a subject may have I am doubtful that may set him upon too near an equality with one upon the throne. My own opinion inclines most to an anniversary thanksgiving by Act of Parliament for so entire a victory, as the most public, the most decent, and the most permanent record of it to posterity, but if this be thought too much because it is upon a fact happening without the kingdom—whereas our precedents of

anniversaries run generally upon occasions at home—I must submit that to better judgments.[1]

One may here note the natural inclination of the Treasurer to turn to the best advantage those rewards which are inexpensive. Yet it would have been better for Marlborough's happiness and dignity if something like this had been done; for the course adopted was to lead him into many embarrassments and some humiliation. It was on all sides agreed that the gift should be, if possible, unanimous. The danger of one proposal being matched against another was avoided by framing the address of the House of Commons in general terms. Accordingly they solicited the Crown to consider proper means of perpetuating the memory of the great services performed by the Duke of Marlborough. The Queen replied, "I am very well pleased by this address, and will take it into my consideration and send you my thoughts upon it in a little time." Anne now gave full rein to the generosity which had been frustrated to her annoyance after the campaign in 1702. On February 17 she informed the Commons that in conformity with their address she proposed to convey to the Duke of Marlborough and his heirs the Royal Manor and Park of Woodstock, and desired "the assistance of the House upon this extraordinary occasion" for the purpose of clearing off various encumbrances upon the estate. The grant comprised about 15,000 acres, and was reported to be worth about £6000 a year.

The necessary Act was speedily passed without opposition. Its preamble contained a convenient epitome of Marlborough's military services up to this time:

> . . . and that, in the first Year of Your Majesty's Reign, the said Duke of Marlborough did so well execute the Commission and Orders, which he received from Your Majesty, as Captain-General and Commander of Your Majesty's Forces, That he not only secured and extended the Frontiers of Holland, by taking the Towns and Fortresses of Venlo, Ruremond, Stevenwaert and Liege; but soon obliged the Enemy (who had been at the Gates of Nimeguen) to seek Shelter behind their Lines; And the next Campaign, by taking Bon, Huy and, Limburg, added all the Country, between the Rhine and the Maese, to the Conquests of the preceding year. And that in the Memorable Year 1704, when your Majesty was generously pleased to take the Resolution of rescuing the Empire from that immediate Ruin, to which, by the Defection of the Elector of Bavaria, it was exposed the

[1] Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, i, 63.

> Measures, which, by Your Majesty's Wisdom and Goodness, had been devised and concerted, were pursued by the said Duke, with the utmost Diligence, Secrecy and good Conduct, in leading the Forces of Your Majesty, and Your Allies, by a long and difficult march, to the Banks of the Danube, where the said Duke, immediately upon his Arrival, did attack and force the Bavarians (assisted by the French) in their strong Intrenchments at Schellenberg, passed the Danube, distressed the Country of Bavaria, and a second time fought the Enemies, who had been reinforc'd by a Royal Army of the French King's best Troops, commanded by a Marshal of France; And, on the second day of August, 1704, after a bloody Battle, at or near Blenheim (altho' the Enemies had the Advantage of Number and Situation) did gain as Absolute and Glorious a Victory, as is recorded in the History of any Age; By which, Bavaria being entirely reduced, Ratisbon, Augsburg, Ulm, Memmingen, and other Imperial Towns being recover'd, the Liberty of the Diet, and the Peace of the Empire was restored, and Landeau, Treves, and Trarbach being taken, the War is carried into the Dominions of France.[1]

At the same time the grant of five thousand a year upon the Civil List, which was valid only for the Queen's lifetime, was made permanent by Parliament. The Queen appointed him Colonel of the First Guards, in which he had originally received his commission; and finally she set herself to plan and build at her expense at Woodstock a splendid palace which, in memory of the victory, was to be called the Castle of Blenheim. She selected Sir John Vanbrugh as the architect, and interested herself keenly in the model which she had had constructed.

Marlborough was highly gratified by the splendid possessions which descended upon him. Although the pressure of great affairs absorbed almost the whole of his mind, his strength, and his time, he liked at odd moments to reflect upon his growing fortune and the princely setting in which his heirs and successors would dwell. He regarded the raising of his family to the first rank in England as second only in importance to raising England to the first place in Europe, and he saw no reason why these two processes should not be combined. His tireless industry and exertion, his profound sagacity and calculation, his constant readiness to stake not only his life, but all he had gathered in reputation and wealth, upon the hazards of war and of well-chosen battle, were faithfully offered in his country's service. But a time was to come when England needed for her guidance some high qualities beyond the constructive and

[1] Lediard, i, 467.

acquisitive genius with which he was born, and when through the lack of these Queen, country, and servant were to taste griefs they had not deserved. The pursuit of power with the capacity and in the desire to exercise it worthily is among the noblest of human occupations. But Power is a goddess who admits no rival in her loves.

It should not, however, be supposed that such a moral was ever drawn by Marlborough. When to the favour and affection of the Queen there succeeded an aversion as strong and far less justified; when, stripped of his offices, he was the target of every calumny which a furious faction could hurl or an envious aristocracy applaud; when all that he had done was belittled and his victories contemned or written off as fully paid, he could still reflect that he had made his fortune, that he had founded his family, and that the stones of Blenheim Palace would weather the storms of a thousand years. Such were the stubborn consolations of this virtuous and valiant builder who built noble monuments beneath the stars.

Chapter Twenty-four

THE MARGRAVE'S TOE

1705—SPRING

THE consequences of Blenheim governed the war in 1705. Louis XIV resolved to stand on the defensive upon all the fronts. Strenuous efforts were made during the winter to repair the losses of France in man-power and equipment. The regular troops were brought to full strength not only by compulsory recruitment, but by large drafts from the militia. The destruction of the cavalry, probably by the disease we now call glanders, was made good by enormous purchases of horses in Switzerland. Severe sacrifices were exacted in taxation, and the clergy alone were induced to contribute a free-will offering equal to six million pounds. To the astonishment of Europe the French armies in the spring were reported to be "more numerous and more brilliant" than ever. Actually, besides maintaining the war in Spain, the Great King was able to place in the field 100 battalions and 100 squadrons under Vendôme in Italy, and 200 battalions and 260 squadrons upon his northern frontiers. These latter were divided into three armies: 80 battalions and 100 squadrons commanded by Villeroy under the nominal orders of the Elector in Flanders; 70 battalions and 100 squadrons under Villars upon the Moselle; and 50 battalions and 60 squadrons in Alsace and upon the Upper Rhine. These Marshals were made aware that the entire forces in the north must be considered as a single group of armies, capable of reinforcing each other in accordance with the enemy's attack. To make this easy the lateral roads behind the front were brought into the best condition, and supplies were distributed along them, as well as in all the fortresses concerned. The Elector during the absence of Villeroy from Brussels had prepared a minor offensive along the Meuse, having for its object the recapture of Huy and Liége at the outset of the campaign. He was, however, told that he must await the development of the allied attack. This was expected along the Moselle, but no final opinion could be formed until the movements of the English were known. As these

were now regarded as the best troops of the allies, it was thought that they would certainly be used for the main offensive. Accordingly it was upon them that the chief attention of the French headquarters was fixed.[1]

It was believed at Versailles that the Grand Alliance would be able to place sixty thousand men in Flanders under Overkirk, sixty thousand on the Moselle under Marlborough, thirty thousand on the Rhine under the Margrave, thirty thousand in Italy under Prince Eugene, and fifteen thousand in Portugal under Galway, in addition to the thirty thousand absorbed by the revolt in Hungary. Besides all these there were the forces of the Duke of Savoy and the King of Portugal, and the immense fleets by which England and Holland maintained what had now become the complete command of the seas. Actually, when the campaign opened, the confederates had, as we shall see, by no means achievea such totals. Nevertheless it may be broadly computed that the allies marshalled for 1705 field armies of nearly a quarter of a million men, and that the Two Crowns resisted them with about two hundred thousand. If we double these figures so as to comprise the garrisons, depots, and all the services in the rear, apart from the manufacture of munitions, we obtain a fair measure of the war effort which Europe now made, prodigious in proportion to its wealth and manhood and to its primitive organization.

Unity of command was imposed by Louis XIV upon the three French armies in the north. But Marlborough, although he tried to manage the whole war and to provide for every theatre, had in fact a lamentably defective control. He could, indeed, lead the dreaded English and the troops paid by the Queen where he pleased. But every movement of the Dutch Army must still be settled both beforehand with the States-General, and at the time with the Dutch Deputies and commanders; and his influence upon the Imperial armies was exerted only through his correspondence with Wratislaw and Prince Eugene. Louis XIV was absolute Commander-in-Chief: Marlborough was only an informal chairman of a discordant committee. In this lies the explanation of the war in 1705. Moving painfully through obstructed channels and pulling many tangled strings, he was, however, able during the winter and early spring to prepare an allied front in the north, so as to leave himself a choice of action and impose uncertainty upon the French. Great magazines were established in the frontier fortresses

[1] Pelet, v. 14.

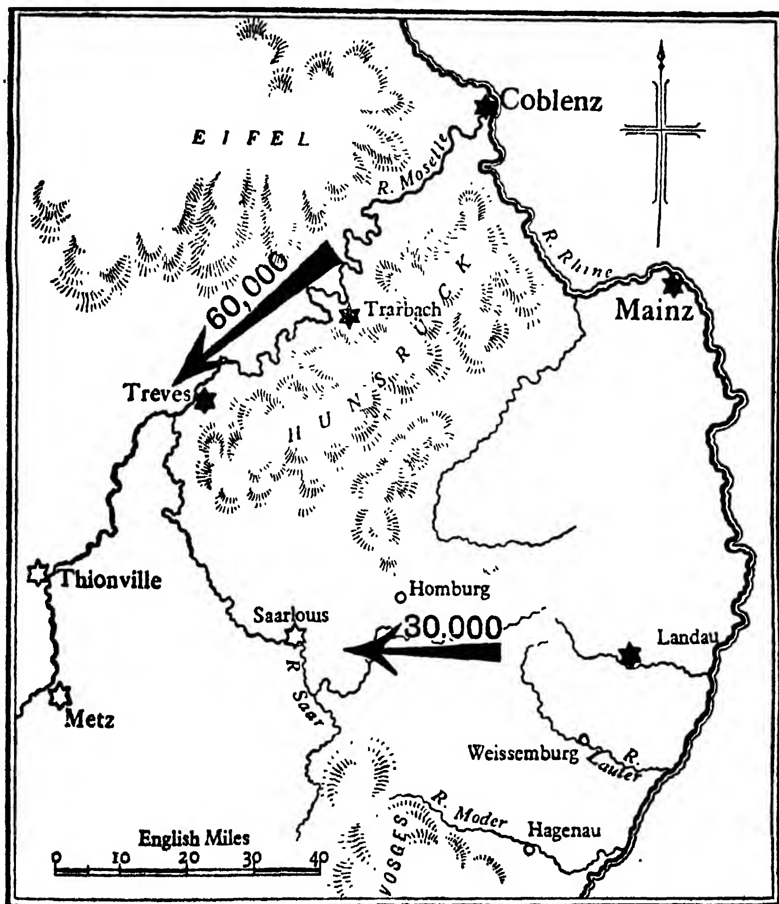
of Trèves, Coblenz, Liége, and Maestricht, and large masses of horse and foot were gathered in Holland. Numerous flotillas of boats and barges were assembled and fitted which could carry all the material down the Scheldt for a siege of Antwerp, up the Meuse for a siege of Namur, up the Moselle for that of Thionville or Saarlouis, or along the Rhine towards Fort Louis, Kehl, or Old Brisach. He had no doubt himself which was the true line of advance.

While the siege of Landau had dragged on Marlborough had agreed with Eugene, and, as they both thought, with the Margrave too, upon the general plan. Marlborough had taken all the preliminary steps. He had recaptured Trèves and Trarbach, and put them in the strongest state of defence. He had made every arrangement in his power with the German princes and the Dutch agents to gather immense magazines in both those fortresses, and had obtained from all the German states concerned the promise that their contingents in the pay of the Sea Powers would be in readiness during April. He had himself visited the Courts of Berlin and Hanover. He had procured the assent of the Dutch Government and the reinforcement of the English army. Making allowances for the slowness of communication and the difficulties of supervision, he had reason to expect that he could take the field about the middle of May.

His plan was to stand upon the defensive in Flanders and on the Upper Rhine, and advance upon Saarlouis and Thionville, through Lorraine into France, with over ninety thousand men. These would be formed in two armies; the smaller, embodying the main war effort of the Empire, would operate under the Margrave from the area about Landau, westward towards the Saar; the larger he would lead himself, south-west up the Moselle. It was the essence of this plan that these two armies should work together within manœuvring distance, so that neither could be overwhelmed. The arrangements which he had made in Italy, and the action of the English fleet in the Gulf of Lions, should enable Prince Eugene at least to hold the French in that theatre, if not, indeed, to press an advantage. Modern military opinion would endorse these conceptions.

The renewed desire of the Maritime Powers to mediate between the Emperor and his Hungarian subjects had thrust more weight on Stepney than the Ambassador could carry. He had espoused the

policy of London and The Hague, already so irritating to Vienna, with an added ardour of his own. He had of necessity come into close touch with Rakoczy, and was on far better terms with the rebel leader than with the Court to which he was accredited. In all this



THE MOSELLE PLAN FOR 1705

he had the authority and support of the English Cabinet, whose orders he was obeying. The vexation of the Emperor and his Ministers, which could not be expressed to the English and Dutch Governments, broke upon the now hated figure of the Ambassador. It was easy to allege that his personal partisanship and tactlessness had become in itself an obstacle between the Empire and its allies.

A demand was made for his recall.[1] Marlborough's headquarters in the field or office in Whitehall was the clearing-house for the ceaseless disputes which threatened to rend the Alliance. To him therefore Wratislaw and Eugene wrote appealing for the withdrawal of Stepney.

Marlborough behaved exactly as an experienced Foreign Secretary would do to-day. He had confidence in Stepney, agreed with the policy of which he was the exponent, and understood the trouble in which it must involve him. He thought, however, that more progress could be made if a new agent were appointed, and that the prospect of the recall of Stepney would smooth the mediation which England and Holland were determined to obtrude. He therefore wrote to Wratislaw from St James's on January 9, insisting upon the acceptance of mediation, declaring that if the Hungarians refused reasonable terms the Maritime Powers would join with the Empire in declaring them public enemies, promising that Stepney would be withdrawn as soon as the Queen could find another post suited to his rank and services, and requesting that he should be treated with all consideration meanwhile. In order to be fair to Stepney, he sent him a copy of the letter, adding:

> Neither must you take it amiss what you will find in relation to the sending another Minister to the Court at Vienna. You will see I have endeavoured to justify you from any blame they may pretend to lay at your door, and you may depend upon it that the Queen will have so just a regard to your services as not to remove you until her Majesty has provided otherwise for you, wherein you may be assured at all times of my good offices wherever they may be wanting.[2]

The Ambassador, inflamed by the local dispute, was so angry that he forgot his duty. He wrote a bitter complaint to his friend Count Harrach, an Austrian dignitary, declaring that Wratislaw was seeking his undoing, and quoting letters written by him to England—as he suggested, with the Emperor's authority—for that purpose. It was now Wratislaw's turn to be aggrieved. His correspondence with Marlborough was not only secret but sacred. He leaped to the conclusion that Marlborough had shown his letters to Stepney. This was quite untrue. Marlborough had never shown

[1] We may judge the feelings of the Emperor from imagining our own if in 1917 the French had proposed to send a Mission to mediate between Great Britain and Irish Home Rulers, in order to set free the forty thousand British troops garrisoning Ireland for service on the Western Front.

[2] *Dispatches*, i, 575.

Stepney Wratislaw's letters, but only one of his own replies; and this in justice and candour to a public servant in a harassing position. Wratislaw's wrath had led him to declare that his personal relations with Marlborough must now end, and that their correspondence in future would be purely formal. Marlborough's answer is a good example of the firmness and dignity with which he could now write.

St James's
February 9

I have received your letter with much surprise. . . . I in no way approve the letter which Mr Stepney has written to Count Harach, believing it to be altogether unfounded in its suggestions; . . . and neither the Secretary of State nor anyone here can understand how he ever felt entitled to write in such a manner; but I must also make it plain to you at the same time that I take it very ill that you should believe me capable of disclosing extracts from your letters. I had counted upon quite different treatment from you.

I see besides from all the rest of your letter that our correspondence is likely in the future to be very sterile, and as perhaps you have not kept a copy of what you have written, I send it you back in order that you may see the coldness with which you quit me [*la froideur avec laquelle vous me quittez*].[1]

To Stepney he was stern.

St James's
February 9

. . . By what I learn from the secretaries or otherwise, I can find no manner of reason for such proceedings on your part, especially since you have been often told by them as well as myself that her Majesty (to whom alone you are accountable) is entirely satisfied with all your transactions at the Court of Vienna; therefore as I now write to Count Wratislaw that I can no wise approve of your proceedings, as you will find by the enclosed copy, I should be glad for my own satisfaction that you would explain yourself a little further from whence it is you have all these reports. You see I have no reserve with you since I send you what I write to him, but must desire that neither this nor anything else you may have from me may be exposed.[2]

The Ambassador bowed to this rebuke, but Marlborough's breach with Wratislaw was an embarrassment not removed for many months. The sending of the Mission was accepted by the Emperor only under extreme duress; and in Vienna the strictures of Imperial policy in which the Parliament and the States-General freely indulged aroused a keen resentment. "I am amazed," protested

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 594. [2] *Ibid.*, 590

Hoffmann to Harley, "that the continuance of the disorders in Hungary is ascribed only to the Emperor, and not attributed in part to the rebels, although the latter make or obstinately maintain demands to which no monarch in the world could agree."[1]

Marlborough reached The Hague in the early days of April. He was evidently full of hope for the campaign, which he thought might carry him far on the road to Paris. As a prelude to taking the field he excelled himself in civilities to old friends and high personages on the enemy side. The return on parole of several gentlemen of fashion who had fallen into his hands at Blenheim afforded an occasion of an agreeable correspondence with Villeroy. He sent on April 15 by one of these indulged captives[2] a most obliging letter about the exchange of prisoners, and ended, "Some of my friends on my departure have begged me to procure a passport for Sieur Philippe du Ruel, one of our comedians, who is to go to Paris with his wife, Eleanor, and two other ladies in order to perfect his art under his old master." The Comte de Grammont, asking for the release of the Marquis de la Vallière, had sent him in December a snuff-box bearing a miniature of the Comtesse de Grammont. Marlborough had replied that he would value it in the same fashion as if she had given it to him herself: "You know me too discreet to show it to our ladies here." An old friend from the days of Charles II, the Duchess of Portsmouth (Louise de Kéroualle), had also written to him about a gentleman for whose lot she was concerned, and had asked him whether he could not procure her some of those liqueurs from Madeira and the Canaries from which Paris was now cut off by the English fleet. "As for sherry," he had written, "I am vexed that one cannot find any here since the war, but Palm wine and cider I shall not fail to send you the best through Brussels, as soon as I arrive in Holland." He now made good these promises. "The sight of the Marquis de la Vallière," he wrote on April 16 to the Comte de Grammont, "will convince you anew how much I defer to your commands, and how I endeavour by every means to deserve the snuff-box." To the Duchess of Portsmouth he wrote on the 27th:

> I am delighted to tell you that the Queen has had the goodness at my request to allow M. de Hautfeuille to pay a visit to France. M. de Monperous has been good enough in leaving here to charge himself

[1] Hoffmann's dispatch of February 6; Klopp, xi, 348.

[2] The Marquis de Monperous.

with a little present of Palm wine which I beg you to accept. I must indeed excuse myself for how little it is; but, since what is good is very rare just now in England on account of the war, I hope you will not take it ill that I have shared with you my campaign store [*ma provision de campagne*]. I hope that next year you will be better provided for here at home with us.[1]

At this time he met again his sister-in-law, the Countess of Tyrconnel, once "the fair Frances" of the Restoration Court. The account he gives of their talks shows the sense they had of being on opposite sides.

John to Sarah

HAGUE
April 21, 1705

*Now that you have settled everything with the builders, I am desirous you would take the first opportunity of sending me the draught Van brook [Vanburgh] promised me.

I am uncertain as yet when I shall leave this place, everything being in a good deal of disorder, and the Generals here being desirous of keeping more troops than is for the Service. I have been again with your sister, who was very full of expressions of your goodness and my civilities, but not one word of Pollatiques, which I am extreme glad of so that if I were to stay here I should see her often without having any constraint. I know not what your correspondence will be able to do, but I can get no Tee that is fit to be drunk. The picture of the battle that is in my closet, I desire may be sent by my Ld. Orkney or my brother or Lt. G. Ingoldsby, the first that shall come; for the painter asks fifty pounds for it, and it is not worth ten pounds. They must give it when they come here to Mr Stanhope.

These were but the lighter touches in a scene which at once became sombre and vexatious in the last degree. The letter ends:

I am like a sick body that turns from one side of the bed to the other; for I would fain be gone from hence, in hopes to find more quiet in the Army. God only knows what ease I may have when I come there. I am only sure that I can never be happy till I am with my dearest Soul.

Everything was behindhand at The Hague and on the Rhine, and everybody in the worst of moods. Marlborough with great labour obtained the consent of the Dutch Government to the concentration of the main army of the Sea Powers round Trèves, and of the second army at Maestricht. He found in the Dutch command an attitude of jealousy and envy towards himself and his astonishing

[1] *Dispatches*, ii, 17.

success. Slangenberg headed the opposition. He claimed that his seniority and exploits entitled him to receive orders only direct from the Dutch Government. The Duke, to conciliate him, paid him in person a visit of ceremony, and in this considerate manner handed him the written order of the States-General to proceed to Maestricht. But Slangenberg, unmollified, objected even to receiving the order of his own Government from the Commander-in-Chief under whom he was to serve. He complained formally to his Government of the slight to which he had been subjected by receiving from the mouth of the Deputy Captain-General directions which should only have reached him through Ministerial channels. He added a demand for a substantial sum of money, which he alleged was due to him for his equipment, and asked also that he should be forthwith appointed governor of Maestricht. It took time and labour to dispose of these pretensions, and when they were dismissed the hero of Eckeren took the field in the utmost ill-humour.

As early as February 6 the Duke had written decisively to Prince Eugene at Vienna. He expressed his disquiet at the lack of care in making the necessary preparations in the Imperial army which was reported to him from all quarters. He asked for an exact statement at the earliest moment of the artillery and powder which the Empire would supply and of the strength of the Margrave's army. He requested that the fortifications of Landau should be repaired forthwith to prevent the field army's being weakened by having to find a large garrison. Lastly he spoke of

> the necessity that the two armies should act in concert on the Moselle and that they should be able to aid each other as the need required. In that case we may be sure that as we advance towards Thionville the enemy will draw their last man out of Alsace to oppose us . . . ; instead of which if the two armies act separately and are not near enough to support each other *it will only cost a stroke of the pen to France to throw her whole force on one or the other*, thus bringing about its ruin or at least rupturing all our plans.[1]

In consequence of Prince Eugene's advocacy the Emperor on February 25 called on the Margrave for his plan of campaign, but gave him at the same time the strongest hint that the two armies should work together. However, Prince Louis, at Rastadt, had formed a different plan. In his view it would be a mistake to concentrate so much force upon a central thrust. It would be better for Marlborough to work along the Moselle, while he would separately

[1] *Dispatches*, i, 591.

advance up the Rhine towards Hagenau and threaten Alsace. He wrote to Vienna a considerable memorandum upon the advantages of disconnected over connected operations. But all this discussion took time, and meanwhile the Margrave adhered to his view. He was building himself "a noble palace with beautiful gardens" at Rastadt. He did not wish to run the slightest risk of opening Würtemberg, Swabia, and Baden to French raids. He dwelt upon the importance of preserving the confederate conquests in Alsace. He was in his heart determined not to serve under Marlborough, or even with him—for that, according to his experience, was the same thing. His antagonism to Prince Eugene in the councils of the Empire continued; but it was dwarfed by his jealousy, now nakedly exposed to Europe, of the laurels which Marlborough had gained at Blenheim. Besides all this, the wound in his foot which he had sustained at the Schellenberg, though slight at the moment, had become troublesome. It broke out again, was no doubt infected, and often became inflamed. Thus Prince Louis developed a resistance, expert, moral, and physical, to the great campaign which proved invincible. In those days, when every objection took at least a week to be answered, such a wealth of reasoning or pretext could not be overcome. On May 5 the Emperor Leopold died. He was succeeded by his son Joseph. This prince was extremely well disposed to Marlborough and an ardent admirer of his military qualities. There were therefore good hopes of support from Vienna.

After sending a succession of emissaries to the Margrave Marlborough had at length arranged a meeting with him at Kreuznach on May 20. Prince Louis now sent word that his leg was painful, and that he could not leave Rastadt. Marlborough, who had hoped to join his army at Trèves on the 21st, was forced, on the contrary, to journey up the Rhine to see his colleague. He travelled sixty miles a day, and on the 22nd was received by Prince Louis, who found himself well enough to spend the first afternoon conducting his guest round his unfinished palace upon which many workmen and gardeners were engaged.[1] The Margrave had by now received definite orders from Vienna to co-operate with Marlborough, and he expressed his willingness to do so, but at the same time he unfolded the lamentable weakness and ill-equipment of his command. Marlborough had been entitled to expect the aid of an Imperial army of 50 battalions and 80 squadrons. He had for some time realized that this would not be forthcoming. All the recruits

[1] Lamberty, iii, 469.

from the Hereditary Lands had been sent to Prince Eugene in Italy, and the Imperial regiments on the Rhine stood at little more than half their strength. A great part of the military effort of the Empire was absorbed in Hungary; even some Prussian battalions in the pay of the Sea Powers, which were due to join the army in Trèves, were still detained in Bavaria. Artillery, food, ammunition, and horses were all woefully scarce. In sending a field-state of the Imperial forces to Godolphin on May 4 Marlborough had written, "You see what a miserable thing a German army is."[1]

The Margrave now made the most of his weakness. It was evident that the plan of working in two armies must be abandoned. One army alone must be formed at Trèves. The Margrave promised to join it. He could only bring 20 battalions and 40 squadrons, or less than half what had been prescribed in the winter. Of these only 12 battalions and 28 squadrons could reach the rendezvous by June 10—the rest must follow as they were ready. But the Margrave agreed formally, and in writing, to lead these forces himself to join Marlborough upon that day. With this the Duke had to be content.

Marlborough paid a flying visit to the Lines of Stollhofen. Cardonnel, who was tired after his hundred and twenty miles' drive, had to spend all day on horseback in a forty miles' 'ramble' round the celebrated fortifications, on which work was ceaselessly proceeding. They went within cannon-shot of Fort Louis, and within three leagues of Strasburg. "From the mountains we clambered up, we could plainly discern the Black Forest, and the mountains of Switzerland. . . . The Prince," he says, "was pretty well when we arrived yesterday in the afternoon, but he kept his bed most part of this day for his lameness."[2] After a week of ceaseless travel Marlborough arrived at Trèves on May 26.

His whole plan depended upon a certain speed of execution. He could not keep his army, with its mass of cavalry, stationary in any place for long. The herbage that year was scanty, and the delays had given Villars time to denude the Moselle valley and to fortify his position. The magazines at Trèves were but half full. Before leaving for England in the previous winter the Duke had arranged contracts with trustworthy agents for this essential supply; but after his departure the Dutch had accepted a lower tender from a commissary of less repute. This worthy had failed in his undertakings and, conscious of his guilt or neglect, now deserted to the enemy. The seven thousand Palatine mercenaries were already three weeks

[1] Coxe, ii, 97.

[2] *Dispatches*, ii, 51.

late, and still ten days distant. The twelve thousand Prussians were more than a week behind them. The troops under Marlborough's command, and in the pay of the Sea Powers, which were assembled round Trèves, were in excellent spirit and condition, well furnished, well disciplined, and eager to fight. In all, they amounted to 83 battalions and 94 squadrons, or about sixty thousand men. The delay had eaten up the local supplies, and even this partly formed army must now either advance or retire. It could not wait at Trèves for the Elector. Twenty-five miles to the southward lay Villars, with 100 battalions and 160 squadrons or nearly seventy thousand men.[1] The positions which he had taken up at Sierck, between the Moselle and the wooded heights of Caldaoven, were naturally strong, well prepared, and connected by military roads with the fortress of Saarlouis. To approach and draw up before them it was necessary to cross both the Moselle and the Saar, and traverse two long, dangerous defiles in the plain, at the farther end of which stood the enemy's army. "The greatest difficulty," Marlborough had written to the Elector of Hanover, "will be to debouch from Trèves."

Moreover, strategic success depended upon Marlborough's being able to make the Moselle attack so dominant upon the enemy that they would have to draw reinforcements both from Flanders and from the Rhine, and so remove any danger of attack in those theatres. If he were able to deal Villars a heavy blow, Villeroy in Flanders would be paralysed. If he were able to invest Saarlouis, the fertile land of Lorraine would nourish the largest armies. The Duke of Lorraine, though nominally neutral and sending envoys to both headquarters, was at heart friendly to the allies, and his people generally shared his feelings. With one hundred thousand men it would have been easy to reach this vantage ground, and thenceforward the whole campaign would have been governed therefrom. But to move through the dangerous gorges with little more than half that number, with the chance of being brought to a standstill, even if not defeated, was a very hardy project. Prudence should have counselled Marlborough to abandon his design. Almost every element in it had already miscarried. The breakdown of the Empire, the reluctance of the Margrave, the tardiness of the Palatine and Prussian contingents, the half-filled magazines, and lastly the failure of the various Electors along the Rhine to supply the three thousand draught-horses needed to draw the siege artillery, provided ample

[1] Various estimates are given. I have come to the conclusion that Boyer (iv, Appendix xiv) is preferable.

justification. But Marlborough's unrelenting will-power and his confidence in himself and his own proved army led him into a most daring perseverance. He determined to traverse the defiles and confront Villars. He hoped that his very weakness might be made the means of victory by tempting the Frenchman to a battle.

Marlborough to Godolphin

TRÈVES
June 2, 1705

*What I have always believed proves true, that the Germans would not be able to act till the middle of June; for till that time I shall not have the Imperialists nor the Prussians with me. However, forage is so very scarce here that I shall be obliged in five days to march, so that if Marshal Villars has power to venture a battle, he may have it. Though I want one-third of the troops that are to compose this army, I depend so much upon the goodness of these I have here that, with the blessing of God, I do not doubt of good success.

He adds a point about the Irish in the French service whom it was always hoped to bring over. His care not to break military faith with anyone is noteworthy.

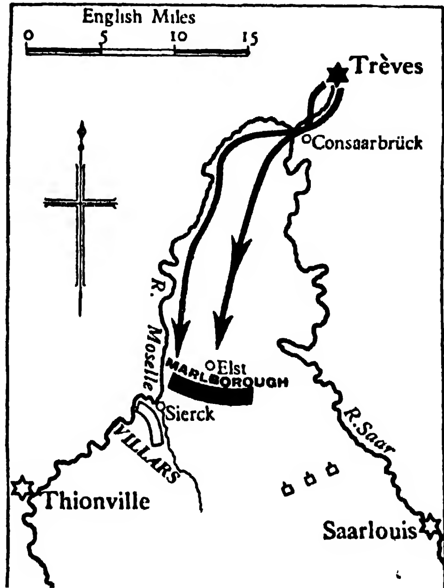
I hope by the next post to send you my thoughts upon what ought to be done concerning the Irish Regts.; for I would be sure to perform what I shall have leave to promise them; for I think the power that is sent me may give them hopes of more than will be performed. . . .

You are certainly very much in the right, that *there ought to be a man of quality sent to this new Emperor*, who has assured me that he will do all he can to quiet the troubles in Hungary; and I verily believe he intends it, being very desirous of carrying the war with vigour against France; but his Ministers and Court are all in factions, which I fear will make it hard for him to execute his good designs.

At two o'clock on the morning of June 3 the Duke began his advance. By daylight his whole army was concentrated at Consaarbrück, having crossed both the rivers, and after a short rest marched in two columns over the hills which stood between them and Sierck. Marlborough followed the Roman road along the ridge, while the second column threaded the valley under his protection. At six in the evening both the columns began to deploy on a broad front in the plain of Sierck. The troops had marched nearly twenty-one miles across uneven ground, and now was the moment for Villars to fight the battle which Marlborough courted. But such was the impression which Blenheim had produced upon the French High Command, and such was the surprise of this arrival that as soon as the heads

of Marlborough's columns and detachments were seen emerging at numerous points from the hills all the enemy advance troops, including a powerful corps before Sierck, hastily retreated into their fortified position, with a loss of some hundreds of prisoners, and the weary English and Dutch infantry lay upon their arms in battle order, unmolested through the night.

The next fortnight was terrible. Villars wisely refused battle. No supplies of any kind could be found in the district. Everything for man and horse must be brought through the defiles from Trèves by convoys requiring strong escort, until the communications could be picketed, and the seven fords of the Moselle properly guarded. Marlborough had sent Cadogan, his Quartermaster-General, far back to appeal to the Margrave to come on. He seems to have managed the supplies himself. There are more than a dozen of his letters in the dispatches about bread and forage.[1] The movement of barges from Coblenz to Trèves, and of convoys thereafter, the distribution of bakers, and the activities of the bakeries both for bread and biscuit, at the front and at the base, claimed the first place in his thoughts. "We are in a country," he wrote to d'Almelo on



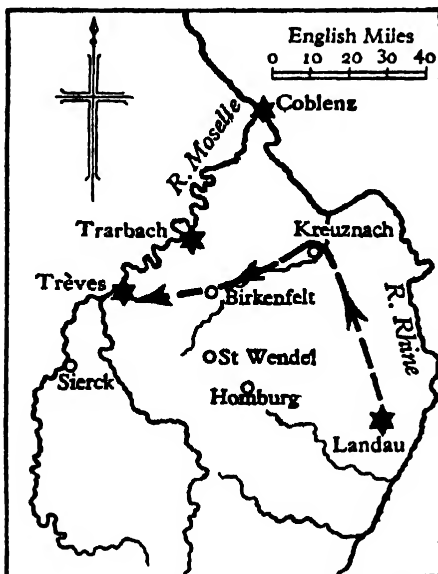
THE ADVANCE TO SIERCK

[1] "Send forward all possible grain and forage from Mainz and Coblenz. Send also with the utmost diligence the biscuit to Trèves, for I shall soon have need of it. Make it known to the vivandiers that they can come to the army and travel in perfect safety, and encourage them as much as you can, for we are in a country where we find nothing. . . .

"Send forward the biscuit as fast as it can be cooked to Trèves, but keep it strictly there, and distribute none without my orders. I shall send the fifty bakers to Saarburg, and the same number will come under escort to-morrow into Trèves. If you require more, you have only to let me know. . . .

"Set every one to work, for I shall soon have need of six days' bread in advance." (*Dispatches*, ii, 74.)

June 6, "where nothing can be found, and should we lack bread even for one day we shall be ruined." He had also to provide for the large reinforcements of the Palatines and the Prussians which were drawing near, and must have in Trèves an ample reserve for contingencies. He therefore drew forward supplies to Trèves by every means through his contractor, Vanderkaa. In the meanwhile he held himself ready for battle at any moment. And almost daily he sent trusted officers back to the Margrave, and to Prussia and to the Rhine Princes, to hasten the fulfilment of their promises.



THE MARGRAVE'S CIRCUIT

While he watched for a chance to spring he maintained an agreeable correspondence with Villars. On June 5 he asked for the return of stragglers from Churchill's command cut off in the march through Luxemburg, "as I know you find no pleasure in the sufferings of these good fellows." He promised to do the same by him with equal numbers. Villars replied the same day with profuse apologies for the extreme curiosity which had forced him to open some intercepted letters addressed to Marlborough, which he sent on "well sealed."[1] Marlborough responded with gifts. "M. de Marlborough has sent me," wrote Villars to Chamillart June 10, "a quantity of liqueurs of England, of Palm wine and cider; one could not receive greater civilities. I have paid him back as much as was possible. We shall see how our serious business will settle itself."[2]

Marlborough fixed his headquarters in the castle of Elst, high on the hills opposite Villars' position, and from here surveyed the situation and the scene. "I am placed," he wrote to Eugene on June 11, "so that by a slight movement and without any obstacle I can come

[1] *Mémoires du Maréchal de Villars*, ii, 341.
[2] Villars to Chamillart, June 10; Pelet, v, 451.

between the enemy and Saarlouis, to which we aspire to lay siege."[1] But nothing could be done without the siege train which lay at Trarbach, and for which the draught-horses were lacking. Whether his measures to obtain these had been at fault we cannot pronounce. Already at the end of April he seems to have counted upon them, and therefore presumably had ordered them some time before. The Palatines had arrived on the 5th, but were mostly required for the communications. The Prussians still lagged on the road. The Würtembergers and Westphalians were only now approaching. As for the Margrave, he had never meant to come. He started as agreed with about nine thousand men from Landau towards the end of May. Instead of marching across to Trèves by Homburg and St Wendel along the route which Marlborough had traversed in the winter, he made a détour of sixty miles by Kreuznach which secured another five days' delay. When Cadogan had ridden through Birkenfelt on the 15th even his cavalry were still two marches away. The Quartermaster-General found the longed-for reinforcements at Kreuznach. But the Margrave was no longer in command. By the advice of his doctors he had repaired to Schlangenbad, a rest by whose waters it was hoped would allay the undoubted inflammation of his wound. The Comte de Frise, who was now in command, manifested no zeal. He moved sluggishly forward. It was certain he would not arrive, if he could help it, before the 20th. But meanwhile what had been happening elsewhere?

Marsin from the Rhine had already reinforced Villars by a larger force than the Margrave had promised to bring. But even more serious news came from Flanders. Villeroy had taken the offensive. On May 21 he advanced upon Huy, and laid siege to this small but significant place. Overkirk, who was but half his strength, was forced back into his entrenched camp under the walls of Maestricht. Villeroy entered the town of Liége on the 18th, and planted heavy batteries against the citadel. From the moment when the French offensive began the Dutch demanded 30 battalions and 30 squadrons from Marlborough for the defence of the Meuse. Deputies were sent, and finally Hompesch, with the most insistent commands and appeals. It is important to notice the threat with which the Dutch backed their demand. It was a threat to make a separate peace.

Marlborough had foreseen such a development. Before leaving Trèves he had hinted to the States-General that he would not be averse from receiving a request to return. This he had done to

[1] *Dispatches*, ii, 92.

secure himself a good reason before Parliament and the Alliance for abandoning his plan, if he should find himself unable to execute it. Now real emergency had arisen on the Meuse, and only the prospect of immediate and decisive action against Villars could absolve him from neglecting it. He had stood for fifteen days in a position of extreme difficulty, and, as it seemed to Europe, of much danger; and during that period he had not been joined by a single soldier not in the pay of the Maritime Powers. Of these several important contingents were still absent, and a month late in their concentration. His plan had failed. The combination he had designed had broken down in respect of every factor not under his direct control. He had hoped against hope, unreasonably perhaps, that his forward movement and dangerous station would draw to him from all quarters the help on which he had counted. He had forced the hands of doubting and obstinate allies the year before, and had dragged them all to victory and safety at Blenheim. He had vainly counted on repeating this process. He now resolved to extricate himself while time remained. In the deepest vexation and distress he wrote to Godolphin and Sarah.

Marlborough to Godolphin

ELST
June 12, 1705

*We have no letters from England notwithstanding the wind has been constantly fair, by which we believe the boats are all on this side; we have every night very hard frosts, which does hurt both to our men and horses. This weather, joined with some wants, makes a great many men desert, so that I have by this post desired of Mr Secretary Harley that with as little noise as possible there might be orders given at the sea-ports for the securing such as shall return. I may assure you that no one thing—neither for the troops nor the subsistence of the Army—that was promised me has been performed. This, and the running over to the enemy [of] our Commissary that has had all the care of our magazine this winter, is the occasion of our having had some uneasiness. If this can't be remedied, and we shall opiniatre the staying here, this army may be ruined without fighting. These considerations and the knowledge I have that it is in this place where we can do most hurt to France, vexes me so that I have made myself sick. I will say no more to you upon this disagreeable subject; but hope if the alarm from the Meuse ceases that our affairs here may mend. Nothing is capable of giving us so much ease but a battle, which I am afraid the French will not venture. You will see by this letter that I am tired out of my life, but whilst I have any, I am truly yours. . . .

John to Sarah

ELST
June 16

I think every minute that I have a thousand things to say, but I am so disturbed by being disappointed of every thing that has been promised me, and that I should have, before I am able to do any thing considerable, that my head turns, so that when I sit down to write, the business of the army hinders me. But you may be assured that you are dearer to me than all the world besides. You will see, by my letter to lord treasurer, the reasons I have for undertaking the march I shall begin to-morrow. I want sleep and quiet; for till I have that, I cannot say I am well, nor do I believe I ever shall be at ease till I am with my dear life. If I had known beforehand what I must have endured by relying on the people of this country, no reasons should have persuaded me to have undertaken this campaign. I will, by the help of God, do my best, and then I must submit to what may happen But it is impossible to be quiet and not complain when there is all the probability imaginable for a glorious campaign, to see it all put in doubt by the negligence of princes, whose interest it is to help us with all they have.

This moment is come lieutenant-general Hompesch, from Monsieur d'Overkirk, to let me know, that if I do not immediately help them they are undone, which only serves to shew the great apprehensions they are in; for it is impossible for me to send troops to them sooner than I have already resolved; but since they have so much fear at the army, I dread the consequences of it at The Hague. I wish my letters that I wrote yesterday were with them, for I then assured them I would venture everything for their security. My dearest soul, pity me and love me.[1]

And in another letter to Godolphin:

I have for these last ten days been so troubled by the many disappointments I have had that I think if it were possible to vex me so for a fortnight longer it would make an end of me. In short, I am weary of my life.[2]

After darkness had fallen on the 17th the confederate army folded their tents and repassed the gorges under pouring rain in a long night march. They were safely across the rivers by noon. Daylight informed Villars that the tented city he had watched for an exciting fortnight had disappeared. Later his trumpet returned to the French camp, bearing an astounding verbal message from Marlborough. "Tell Marshal Villars that I am in despair because the Margrave has broken his word, and that I can hold only him

[1] Coxe, ii, 120. [2] *Ibid.*, 121.

responsible for the breaking up of all our plans."[1] A less trustworthy account has added, "Be assured that my contempt of him does not equal my respect for you."[2] From Trèves the next morning Marlborough wrote to the Emperor and Wratislaw, as he had written from Elst on the 16th to the King of Prussia and all the German princes concerned in the fiasco, an explanation of his action, which was in fact a grievous reproach. In every case he repeated the statement that he had waited for fifteen days in the camp at Elst without any other troops but those in the pay of England and Holland joining him; and that the alarms which the enemy, through inaction on the Moselle, had been able to cause in Holland had compelled him to withdraw. And in each case he held out the hope that in five or six weeks, if all was in readiness, he might be able to return.

When Villars' account of Marlborough's message was received at Versailles together with the Marshal's jubilant dispatch, the Court asked, with some relish, "Since when was it customary for a hostile commander to make his excuses to his antagonist for not having been able to attack him?" But this curious proceeding had another object besides relieving Marlborough's personal and professional feelings. Versailles was the sounding-board of Europe, and he meant to use it and every other means to fasten his just complaint upon the Margrave for all to see and hear. He knew how serious would be the attacks to which he himself would be subjected by the Tory Opposition, and he meant deliberately to invite the English people, at that moment in the throes of a general election, to pronounce between him and the foreign general who had tripped him up. He knew the English people and its politics well enough to be sure what the answer would be. Lord Treasurer Godolphin and Mr Speaker Secretary of State Harley, vying with one another, thrust forward the same suggestion, and only their most secure and audacious opponents dared to take the part of this German incompetent, or worse, with a pain in his toe, against the victor of Blenheim. This was rough work, and cannot be admired in any age whose popular elections are conducted with restraint, with good taste, and without appeals to prejudice.

The position of England in the Grand Alliance was now so strong through her wealth, her energy, the bravery of her troops, and the genius of her commander, that the rebuke to her allies was not in effect injurious, but, indeed, salutary. Historical justice, however, compels us to inquire whether the Margrave's conduct deserved it.

[1] *Mémoires de Villars*, ii, 347. [2] *Histoire de Jean Churchill*, ii, 83.

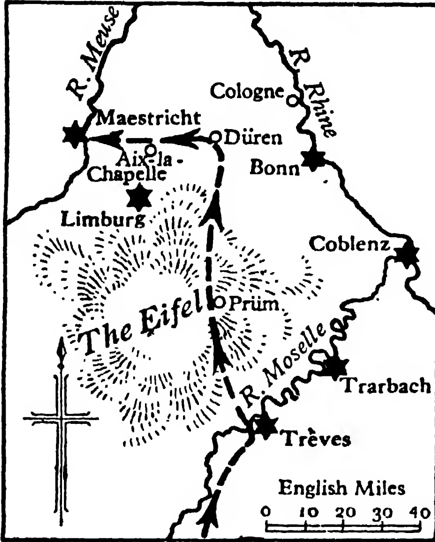
It was freely alleged that his illness was a pretence, and about this there was contradictory evidence. Although Prince Louis undoubtedly died two years later from the septic reactions of his slight but unmanageable wound, he was able after this time to conduct two campaigns. He could superintend the building of his palace and the laying out of his gardens in his leisure. He was able at intervals often to make long rides and journeys. But one of Marlborough's English officers, who was with him when he handed over his command and retired to Schlangenbad, got near enough to see his foot when the bandages were removed for the doctors to examine it. He wrote to Marlborough that the leg was much inflamed, and that the doctors were all agreed that immediate rest was imperative. The Prince of Baden was neither traitor nor malingerer.

But this by no means disposes of the charge against him—apart from his general inadequacy—of ill-will and bad faith. Without quitting his bed at Rastadt he could have given the orders which would have brought his troops to Trèves by June 10. After all previous delays he had promised in writing they should start upon May 27.[1] The distance from Landau to Trèves by the road which Marlborough had traversed in October was only about sixty-five miles. It was safe and easy for a force unencumbered with cannon, and moving towards its supplies. Twenty-three days later these troops were still little more than half-way round the circuitous route their general had selected, which in itself was only 125 miles in length. They had actually made no more than seventy miles in three weeks, or an average of little more than three miles a day. And this while the army to whose help they were going was awaiting them outnumbered and in danger of both battle and starvation! Nothing could palliate this, and Wratislaw assured Marlborough that the Emperor would have dismissed the Margrave "but for his connexions and influence, not only as the reigning Prince of Baden, but throughout the Circles of Swabia and Franconia."

At Trèves Marlborough made the dispositions which the new situation required. The abandonment of the Moselle offensive released the full force of hostile pressure on both the Meuse and the Upper Rhine. It was necessary immediately to strengthen the Margrave. Marlborough had requested the Comte de Frise to meet him at Trèves to concert arrangements. But that officer, not wishing to face him, sent excuses. The Duke nevertheless ordered the splendid Prussian corps to join the Margrave. He left Count d'Aubach with

[1] *Dispatches*, ii, 52.

the seven thousand Palatines to garrison the fortress of Trèves and guard its still vastly important magazines. He allowed his own troops an indispensable two days' rest to recover from the night march and the privations of Sierck, and to replenish their wagons and equip themselves for their new task. On the 20th he plunged into the wooded mountainous region, then almost a wilderness, which lies between the Moselle and the Meuse. He marched in several columns with all possible speed. On the 23rd he was at Prüm, on the 25th at Duren, and on the 27th at Maestricht. Frantic messages met him from the Dutch at every stage. He declared he would arrive in time to save the citadel of Liége, "if its Governor did his duty." To make sure of being in time, and if possible of capturing the French siege train, he again adopted the expedient he had used before the Schellenberg, and ordered his brother to select a hundred men from every battalion to form a special force to act with the cavalry. The whole army was exhorted to make the greatest efforts. They responded nobly, it being understood that Villeroy might be caught and brought to battle. For ten days they averaged about eleven miles a day, though not without much suffering and some loss of life. At Hanef on July 2 the confederate armies united, and Marlborough was at the head of 104 battalions and 168 squadrons. But the rumours of his approach had ended the siege of Liége. On the 25th, while he was still at Duren, Villeroy dismantled his batteries and retreated within the Lines of Brabant. The measures to recapture Huy were at once set on foot. Thus the situation in Flanders was speedily restored.



MARLBOROUGH RETURNS TO THE MEUSE

Marlborough had received bad news at Maestricht. Count d'Aubach with his seven thousand Palatines had been left in charge of Trèves and the magazines collected there. These were still highly

important. Without the slightest attack this officer on June 26 evacuated the city. After destroying the mass of costly material he fell back on Trarbach, where the siege train and ordnance stores had fortunately been deposited. It was not until two days after he had quitted Trèves in this shameful manner that Villars, hearing the news, sent a detachment of four hundred men to occupy the abandoned forts. Marlborough's anger at this abominable behaviour was keen. For a month his letters bear its traces. No explanation was ever vouchsafed to him by Count d'Aubach, nor was there, it seems, any effectual means by which this general, although in the pay of the Sea Powers, could be brought before a military tribunal. Months afterwards we find him still in command, and Marlborough compelled to correspond with him. However, by his letters Marlborough had blasted his reputation throughout Germany, and at the close of the campaign d'Aubach disappeared from the scene. The loss of Trèves and its stores ended all chances of Marlborough's return to the Moselle. He never returned there in any of the campaigns, and the surest road to Paris was never trodden by the allied armies.

We must not imagine when we survey this ill-starred episode that Marlborough's hard-bitten professional critics were always wrong about his operations. A solid case can be set forth against his attempt upon the Moselle. No doubt it was the true road into France, and if he could have planted his armies in unravaged Lorraine the highest prizes were within reach. But before he left Trèves he must have known that nearly all the conditions which would render such a movement possible were lacking. He required not only an army or armies of a hundred thousand men, but also to be able to make a speedy advance into the fertile regions. He could not hope to maintain armies of the size required for more than a few weeks in denuded districts upon any magazines which could have been created. But with less than these numbers the great thrust at the heart of France would not become dominant. It would be brought to a stop, and then immediately diversions would begin. Yet he persisted. To use his own phrasing, he "opiniatred" the matter. He tried to compel events beyond any fortune that men may hope from the gods. A battle at heavy odds with all the penalties of defeat at their highest and the rewards of victory severely curtailed was the most he could have expected at Sierck. This was all he sought, and even this he was denied.

Then we see a fresh aspect of his ingenious mind. He prepares his retreat. He also prepares his reasons for a retreat. He feeds the

Dutch with the very arguments he had so often tried to eradicate from their minds. He thrusts forward on this bleak adventure armed with the certainty of a recall, which he can use the moment that he needs it, to make his case to Parliament and to Europe. He does not scruple to launch a hard propaganda because he could not force men—and, we must add, facts and figures—to his high military purpose. He fastens the odium of failure where it was indeed not ill-deserved, but where it had little bearing. His Moselle plan required a very much greater development of supplies, transport, and comradeship than the Grand Alliance could produce. He ran the gravest risks on the chance that Villars would accept a battle, which was in itself a crowning risk. He extricated himself from all entanglements with extreme adroitness, and had an answer on every point to his critics. He also brought the army back safely, and in time to chase Villeroy from the Meuse. But it cannot be denied that many weeks of precious time and immense resources gathered with difficulty were fruitlessly expended in order to convince him that he could not realize his bright strategic dream. Still, in every war some one at the summit of intellect and authority has to try, and try very hard.

Marlborough had no need to offer excuses to the States-General for his failure upon the Moselle. They had nothing but gratitude to utter for his swift return. Yet their thanks were wounding. "How often," said the Dutchmen in effect, "have we begged Your Grace not to go so far from home to help these unworthy and ungrateful allies? Did we not warn you they would fail you? Never let yourself be put in such an unfair position again. Stay here with us and we shall all be safe, so long as we do not fight any battles. After all, you have a splendid army, and there are many fine fortresses to take." This absolute stultification of all Marlborough's conceptions of war only increased the bitterness of his disappointment. He wrote and spoke openly of his resolve to resign his command and quit the service. But of course at this time there was no chance of his being indulged. Such language expressed his feelings, and at the same time strengthened his power. He still hoped "some accident," by which he meant a battle, might enable him to rescue the campaign from failure. But further tribulations were in store. He was to find that he had exchanged the delays and excuses of the Margrave for the open insolence and mutinous obstruction of Slangenberg. He had been deserted in Germany: he was to be fettered in Holland.

Chapter Twenty-five

THE LINES OF BRABANT

1705—SUMMER

THE famous Lines of Brabant covering the sixty miles from Antwerp to Namur have been frequently mentioned in this account. Then as now the best military opinion accorded only a secondary value to such systems of defence. The obstacles of ramparts, dammed-up streams, entanglements of felled trees, palisades with forts and redoubts at intervals, could easily be traversed, if no one was there to defend them. They were therefore only regarded as affording a series of carefully considered fortified battlegrounds upon which the defending army could meet its presumably stronger assailants. For this purpose all the sideways roads behind the lines were carefully developed; food, forage, and ammunition were stored under guard in strongholds at convenient intervals; and as the lines, following the course of the river Demer, curved outward towards the enemy, it seemed probable that with proper dispositions the defending army would arrive and man the ramparts before any large force could attack them. If so they would have a very great advantage. The method of the assailants was, of course, to deceive the enemy by feints into sending his field army in one direction while they themselves marched under the cover of night in the other.

There had not been any difficulty in making minor surprise attacks upon portions of the lines, and we have seen how Spaar at the beginning of 1703 and Overkirk during the winter of 1704 had without much loss made themselves masters for a time of sections of the defences. In 1704, while Marlborough was on the march to the Danube, Overkirk had been disconcerted by the ease with which a portion of his own army had penetrated the lines south of Merdorp, and had made haste under the orders of the Republic to abandon such audacious gains. But the intention to carry the main army across the defences not only made surprise more difficult, but was tantamount to seeking battle either during or after the passage of the barrier. The Dutch had always shrunk from this as

partaking of the nature of gambling with armies and contrary to their methods of warfare.

Marlborough, chafing over his disappointment on the Moselle, saw in forcing the lines the only means now open to rescue the whole campaign from failure. He saw no insuperable difficulty in the operation. There were a dozen ways of doing it—here or there; and as he was above all things anxious to fight a battle, about which he also felt confident, he was not alarmed by the risk. According to the principles which had gained acceptance during so many years of war, an army attacking under these conditions ought to have had substantial superiority over the whole force of the enemy. In fact he was somewhat weaker, having 92 battalions and 160 squadrons to Villeroy's 100 battalions and 147 squadrons, or say seventy thousand men in the open against seventy-three thousand behind their defences. This did not deter him. He had studied the country and the lines profoundly over many years, and their aspect was to him an open book. He therefore in the first days of July formed a plan nicely conceived in times and distances and garnished with the appropriate feints and deceptions whereby the lines could be forced. The novel feature, apart from his being numerically weaker, was his selection of the point to be attacked. Instead of seeking the weakest part of the defences, he chose one of the strongest. He argued to himself that because it was the strongest it would be the least considered, and probably defended by the fewest covering troops. He would feint therefore at a weak part of the lines, to which the enemy would have to hurry their main forces, and then by a very long night march in the opposite direction his men would assault the earthworks where the defenders were but few.

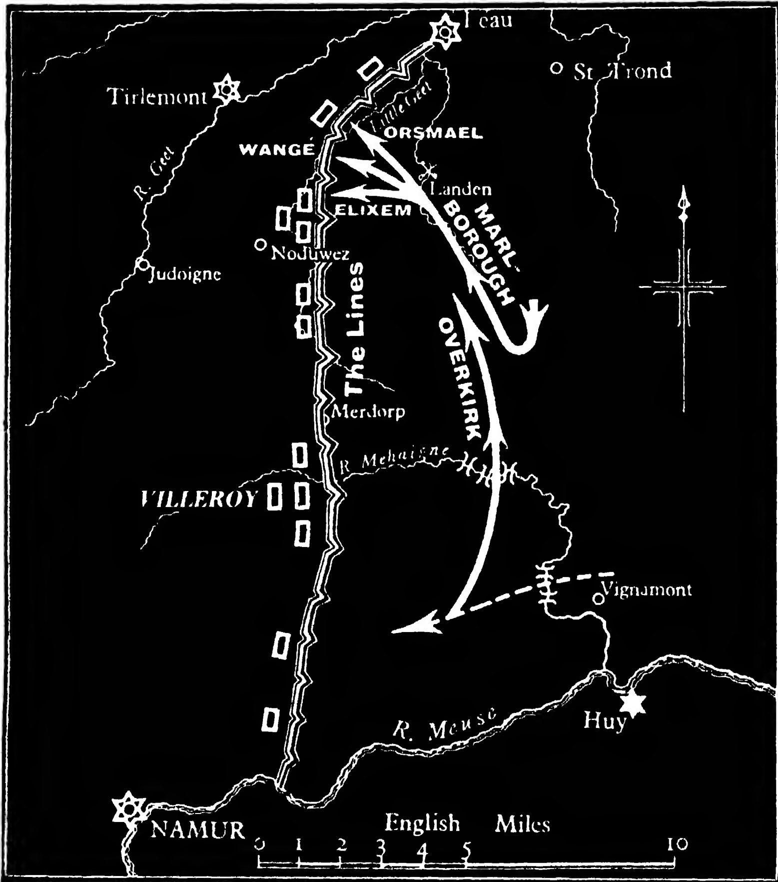
His greatest difficulties, as usual, were presented by his own friends. The Government and States-General of the Republic cherished and admired him, but they trembled at his reckless and ruthless habit of mind. He seemed constantly to leave a great deal to chance. They felt that almost all his exploits would have ended badly if events had taken a slightly different turn. There was no general then alive except Eugene—and even Eugene was judged more correct—who appeared to trouble so little about taking what any experienced officer knew was a very dangerous course. It is marvellous indeed that during all these ten campaigns he was never made to pay any forfeit. He certainly ought to have been punished scores of times for his unprofessional temerity. The Dutch felt in their bones that they were always in jeopardy when they rode

with him. It was only after Ramillies that they gave up thinking about it, and forgot for a while to clutch at the reins or the brake.

But with the generals of their army other complications appeared. Slangenberg, the hero of Eckeren, veteran of forty years of war, hated Marlborough as a foreigner, as a rival, and as a man. He had formed a low opinion of his tactics at Blenheim. He would not bow to the imposture of their success. No experienced, well-trained commander would have attempted such an operation. It was his duty and should be his care to prevent any such hare-brained gambling with the army that guarded the frontiers of Holland. Besides this he was personally annoyed by the fact that the Duke's brother, General Churchill, had through accelerated English promotion become senior to him as General of Foot. Finally, he had a poor opinion of Overkirk, whom he thought too old for active service, too subservient to Marlborough's insidious influence, and personally obnoxious because he held the chief command which another might better have discharged.

For all these reasons it was not deemed expedient to make Slangenberg privy to the design. Indeed, Marlborough seemed inclined to deal only with the Veldt-Marshal Overkirk as responsible chief of the Dutch army. At the council of war the plan of forcing the lines was not presented in the form in which he intended to carry it out. The proposal put forward was that the attack should be made on the weaker sector between the Mehaigne and Namur. The Dutch generals pointed out that they must expect to find the main French army behind the fortifications. They were all opposed to such a costly attempt. But Marlborough persisted, and Overkirk seemed to be with him; and after several days of confrontation rather than discussion the Council agreed to a manœuvre for forcing the lines, provided that no undue risks were run, and that no battle was fought without a further council of war, if peradventure the enemy should be found in force at the point of attack. Marlborough, impassive, inscrutable, endured this protracted ordeal, and accepted the grudged and limited authority offered to him. Since he had come back from the Moselle he had not merged the armies into one as had been the custom in the earlier campaigns before he went to Blenheim. On the contrary, he seemed bent on keeping all the English and the Queen's troops separate in his own hand, and he dealt with the Dutch army only through Overkirk, who seemed to Slangenberg and other brave Dutch officers willing to be his tool or his dupe. In fact Overkirk had become increasingly

be ready to march, the baggage to be assembled by six. These preparations disquieted the field Deputies. They were, however, assured that only a reconnaissance was intended. At seven Count Noyelles, with twenty battalions and thirty-eight squadrons, started



DARKNESS

upon the road which leads through Landen to Saint-Trond. Six hundred pioneers with their tools and bridging-material were attached to the advance guard. Great pains had been taken about the numerous guides, and Noyelles and his principal officers knew the country well. As the making of fascines would have aggravated the suspicions of the enemy, each trooper carried instead a truss of hay which might either serve to cross a marshy stream or as forage

for a long march. Marlborough himself started at ten with the rest of his army. The whole of the confederates were thus marching steadily towards Landen through a very dark night.

Marshal Villeroy did not lack vigilance. He was aware that the allies were on the move. He remained, however, in total uncertainty. Numerous conflicting rumours had reached him. The most trustworthy pointed to a general attack the next day upon his lines south of Merdorp, and for this he was well prepared. Even when reports came in during the night that allied horse were moving northwards he concluded that their objective was Saint-Trond. Meanwhile he enjoined a strict alertness along the whole front. All his infantry and cavalry with their general officers slept on their arms at the head of their camps. Constant patrols were ordered out, especially from the posts on the left. He himself passed the night at Merdorp.

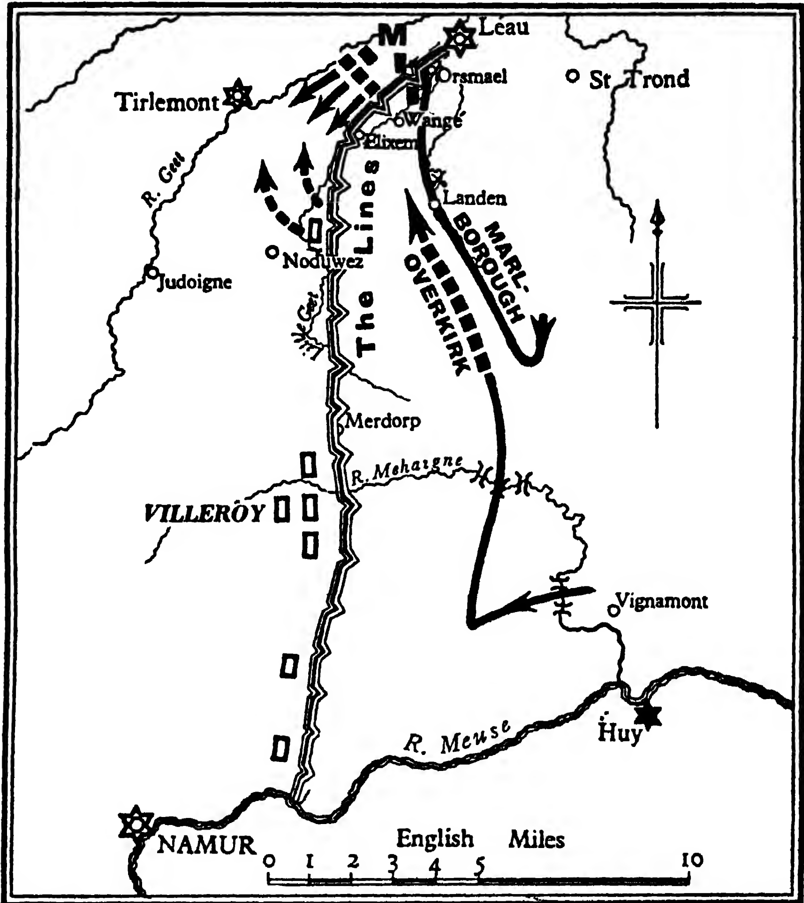
In spite of all precautions Noyelles' corps had much difficulty in finding its way through the black night. They toiled and stumbled across the battlefield of Landen, where thousands of skeletons had long lain unburied. They were nearly two hours late in reaching Landen itself. Up to this point their aim might well have been Saint-Trond. But now Noyelles in three separate columns marched towards the passages of the Little Geet, behind which ran the French fortifications. The distance was but three miles. Lord Orkney commanded the van of Marlborough's infantry. "Though we had all the best guides that could be had," he wrote while the event was hot upon his mind,

> Count Noyelle lost his way at least two hours in the night, as also the first line, which I led, and the second line also. However Noyelle, by peep of day, came near to Orsmael, where the Geet runs before their line. There appeared a camp upon the right and left of the place. However he marched down to the bridge, where the enemy had a small guard, which made but very little resistance. We got some men on the other side; but these bridges were so bad that hardly above one man could go over abreast, and in some places one foot man and a horse-man passed over together. However, though the passages were very bad, people scrambled over them strangely. My Lord sent me word to make what haste I could with the line [*i.e.*, his troops]; and, though I had lost my way, I got up before the bridges were empty of the horse.[1]

In fact Noyelles broke into the entrenchments at three points—

[1] "Letters of the First Lord Orkney," *English Historical Review*, April 1904, p. 312.

at Elixem, Wangé, and Orsmael. The Little Geet here is but a marshy stream three or four yards wide. Storming parties of grenadiers waded through the water or rushed the stone bridge at Elixem. The French posts, suddenly aware of overwhelming



DAWN

numbers swarming upon them through the morning mists, fell back amid a splutter of firing. The three dragoon regiments in Orsmael fled at full speed into the fortress of Léau without even giving an effective alarm. There is no moment in war more thrilling than a surprise attack at dawn. The confederate pioneers threw themselves diligently into bridge-making; but the infantry would

not await their efforts. They knew too much about the war not to realize how precious was every moment. In their ranks were veteran officers and sergeants who had fought at Landen twelve years before. It had been the talk of the camp for weeks that the lines would cost ten thousand men. Here were the lines empty and undefended. To the impulse of adventure was added the sharp spur of self-preservation. Everywhere, forgetting eighteenth-century drill, they splashed through the Geet, scrambled up the bank, down into the miry ditch beyond, and hand and foot up the ramparts of the bugbear lines. From 4 A.M. onward they were pouring into the fortifications and forming up in good order on the farther side. Every house and every hedge they seized or lined. By five o'clock at least six thousand men were inside the French position. Meanwhile bridges and passages had multiplied behind them, and Noyelles' horse, almost equal to two modern cavalry divisions, were passed over. Behind the Geet the ground rises into fine open, down-like country, stretching to Tirlemont, perhaps fifty feet higher than the river-bed. Between Elixem and Tirlemont they had formed between half-past five and six a double line of horse at right angles to the entrenchments, facing south and with their left upon their ever-growing infantry. And now the enemy appeared in force.

Orkney, approaching the bridges in his turn with the Guards and the infantry of the first line, says:

> By the time I came to the river, I could see two good lines of the enemy, very well formed, coming down upon our people, a line of foot following them. We were in very good condition to receive them, and we outwinged them, and still more troops coming over the pass. As I got over the foot guards, I saw the shock begin.[1]

The French had reason to complain of the way in which their outposts served them. Small posts cannot resist armies; but at least they are expected to cry "Alarm." It was not till after five o'clock that d'Alègre, only three miles south of Elixem, learned what was happening. He mounted thirty-three squadrons of Bavarian, Spanish, Cologne, and French cavalry, and sent for the eleven infantry battalions under Caraman, who were four miles farther off. By six all these troops were moving forward. With them hastened ten guns of a new design. These were the triple-barrelled guns which could either fire three cannon-balls in quick succession or three at once. High hopes and much mystery had

[1] "Letters of the First Lord Orkney," *loc. cit.*

enveloped this invention, the last word in modern artillery. By half-past six collision was imminent.

Towards Tirlemont from the Geet there run two sunken roads. The northern, near Elixem, which can be seen unaltered to this day, is a remarkably deep ravine with sides so steep that anyone would hesitate even to lead a horse up and down them. The hostile cavalry halted on their own side of this obstacle. They were already galled by fire from the houses, roads, and hedges by the Geet. The leading brigade of allied infantry advanced and seized the sunken road, and by their volleys forced the enemy to draw back out of shot. It happened, or Marlborough had arranged, that the sixteen squadrons that had first come across comprised the whole of the British cavalry. These, shielded by the infantry, either crossed the sunken road where it was practicable, or else, coming round where the road shallowed into the upland, continually stretched out to their right towards Tirlemont.

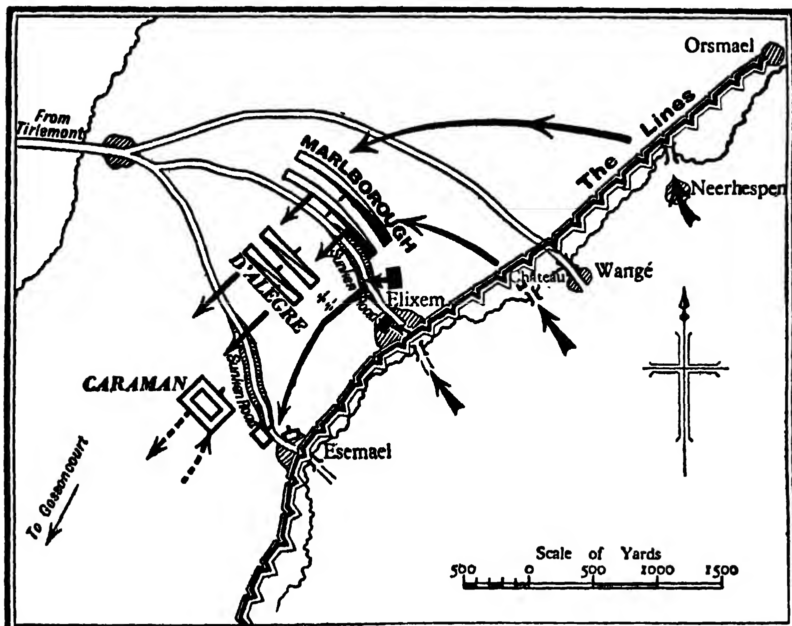
Let us salute these famous regiments of the British Army as they draw out in line on this summer morning. On the right, the Scots Greys; next the Royal Irish Dragoons (later called the 5th Lancers); next the King's Dragoon Guards; the 5th Dragoon Guards; the 7th Dragoon Guards; then the Carabineers (6th Dragoon Guards); and finally the 3rd Dragoon Guards. Such is the array.

The matter stood thus when Marlborough, a little before seven, came on the scene. He saw before him two lines of hostile cavalry and, more than a mile away, Caraman's infantry deploying. He resolved to attack the horse while they were still separated from their foot. He had now already on the ground over fifty squadrons, but not more than half of these were clear of the sunken road or prolonging the line towards Tirlemont. He rode to the right centre of the line and ordered the charge. All the English cavalry, with the Scots Greys on the extreme right, rode forward upon the enemy in echelon at a trot which it is believed, in parts of the line at least, broke into a gallop. The Bavarians were magnificent to see. They were nearly all cuirassier regiments. The Reverend Dr Hare at his master's side wrote two days afterwards, "There was in the plain on the other side about twenty-five squadrons of the enemy, many of them Bavarians and all in armour."[1] Between their squadrons appeared the triple-barrelled guns, which opened a remarkably rapid fire. But the result was never for a moment in doubt. The Bavarians where they met the shock were overthrown, and for the

[1] Hare Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 202.

rest driven into flight. On the right the Scots Greys broke four squadrons without losing a single man. The guns were taken.

Marlborough led the charge himself. He rode with the front rank like a trooper. The routed horsemen made no bones about galloping across the second and much easier sunken road. Arrived here, the Duke again became a General. Caraman's division was close at



ELIXEM

hand in line of battle. The left of the English cavalry was checked by infantry in the hedges and ditches along the Geet. Five fresh squadrons, including the Cologne Life Guards, reinforced the enemy. They rallied and attempted a charge. There was a moment of confusion. But by now the second line of the allied horse had also come upon the scene. A second charge was delivered by both lines of the allied horse, certainly no faster than a trot. Marlborough again rode with the English squadrons. This time the rout of the enemy's cavalry was final. They galloped off the field, leaving their pursuers face to face with the musketry of Caraman's infantry, who had at length arrived. According to Orkney,

> My Lord Marlborough in person was everywhere, and escaped very narrowly; for a squadron, which he was at the head of, gave ground a

> little, though [it] soon came up again; and a fellow came to him and thought to have sabred him to the ground, and struck at him with that force, and, missing his stroke, he fell off his horse. I asked my Lord if it was so; he said it was absolutely so. See what a happy man he is.

And then, referring to the success:

> I believe this pleases him as much as Hogstet did. It is absolutely owing to him.[1]

There are several accounts of this incident. These say that a Bavarian officer, recognizing the Duke, rode out alone at him, and, rising in his stirrups to cut him down, lost his balance; or perhaps the two horses bumped each other: the officer fell upon the ground and was made prisoner by Marlborough's trumpeter, or, it is also said, dispatched upon the spot. It was hurly-burly. Usually, of course, the Commander-in-Chief would be attended by half a dozen devoted aides. His campaigning sword, which the corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms now possesses, was not a weapon with which more than a formal thrust could have been made. In the confusion he was left for the moment well-nigh defenceless. Certainly he was lucky to escape the fate of gallant old Schomberg, who was killed this way at the ford of the Boyne.

It was now eight o'clock. Marlborough, with his retinue and staff again about him, could survey the scene. Practically his whole army was inside the lines and advancing southwards between the Little Geet and Tirlemont. Overkirk, with all the Dutch, was approaching the bridges and river-crossings, now good and numerous; but it would be at least two hours before they could form in order of battle. Where was Villeroy? That was the question. The upland ridge rose in a gentle slope, and tended to narrow to the southward. Beyond the skyline, two miles away, all was unknown. If the alarm had been promptly spread, the Marshal at Merdorp should have learned before six o'clock that the allies had forced the lines between Orsmael and Elixem. Merdorp was only seven miles away from the second sunken road. It might well be that forty thousand men were approaching just "on the other side of the hill." It was the peculiar quality of Marlborough that his moods of awful gambling sprang from cold calculation, and were followed by sudden sober caution. Certainly when all were aflame he now pulled up with a snap.

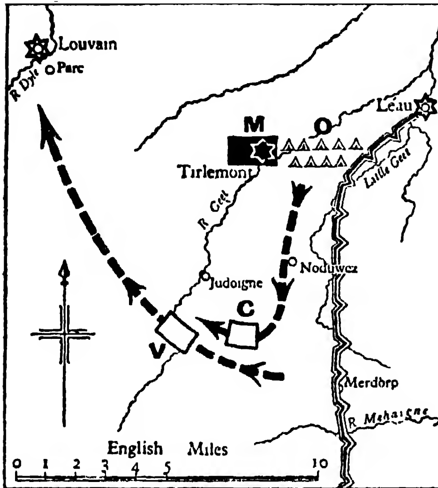
The remaining feature of this brilliant action was the retreat of

[1] "Letters of the First Lord Orkney," *loc. cit.*

Caraman. After the fight the French—by no means less prone than other races to require the highest conduct from allies—were vicious about the Bavarian cavalry. They spoke of them as inferior troops who had failed at the moment of trial, who had let themselves be chased from the field by the truculent English. But throughout Europe, as well as at Versailles, the conduct of Caraman's foot was admired. Collecting the battalions which were involved in the infantry fight by the river, and keeping always a respectable order, he formed his eleven battalions into a large hollow square, and in this array made good his retreat from the field. This feat excited wonder at the time; and it is another proof of the increasing fire-power of disciplined infantry. The English cavalry leaders and, we may be sure, Lord John Hay, of the Scots Greys, believed they could break this square, and several squadrons attempted to do so independently. But Marlborough would have none of it. Neither would he advance his infantry, now nearly thirty thousand strong, very far, and only with precaution. We now know that the danger he apprehended did not exist. Villeroy did not hear the news at six: he did not hear it till eight. He and the Elector only got their army on the march about nine. Galloping on ahead to the field with their leading squadrons, they met the flying rabble to which the Bavarian horse had been reduced. The infantry of the French army were still two hours away.

Marlborough dealt separately in daring and in prudence. Sometimes he was over-daring and sometimes over-prudent; but they were separate states of mind, and he changed from one to the other in quite definite phases. Having ruptured the lines and routed the counter-attack, the thought that dominated his mind was to concentrate the whole confederate army upon the conquered ground. We can express his feelings in the characteristic phrases of the Cockpit circle. "The army must be gathered with all speed imaginable. Until then I shall be most uneasy." There is no doubt that upon the knowledge which he had this was the right decision; and yet in fact, if he had given way to the general ardour around him, he might have had a greater success. Perhaps this extraordinary quality of using audacity and circumspection as if they were tools to be picked up or laid down according to the job is the explanation of his never being entrapped in ten years of war. His mind was a weighing machine for practical affairs as perfect as has ever been known. Infallibility is not for mortals. It is enough to say that no one could do more than he could or try harder and more continuously.

It is on this morning field of Elixem that we see him as he should be remembered. It was one of the very few moments in his life when he came in contact with spontaneous mass affection. As he rode up sword in hand to take his place in the cavalry charges, the troopers and their officers broke into loud acclamations, quite unusual to the military etiquette of those formal times. And afterwards, as he moved along the front of his army, the soldiers, mostly Blenheim men, cast discipline to the winds and hailed him everywhere with proud delight. Here were the dreaded lines pierced and broken so easily, and the enemy baffled and put to flight, not at the cost of thousands of poor soldiers, but by the sleight of a master-hand and by the Queen's troops alone; and here was Corporal John, who could do it every time if only he were set free, who was so careful of their food and pay and so just in his government of the army, who thought for all as their commander and fought in the scrimmage as a private man—surely for once they might show him what they felt! Yet these soldiers were judges of war, and many knew the country well. Amid their cheers were mingled the cries, "Now! On to Louvain," and "Over the Dyle."



10 A.M.

It was ten o'clock before Overkirk's army was across the lines. Marlborough, returning from the pursuit of the determined Caraman, was greeted by Slangenberg with the remark, "This is nothing if we lie still here. We should march on Louvain or Parc." The Duke would have demanded no better. He had, however, already heard from Overkirk that his troops must camp at once. Considering that they had marched twenty-seven miles in the last thirty-one hours, no complaint could be made of this. Still, as Colonel Cranstoun, who commanded the Cameronians, wrote:

> Those who know the army and what soldiers are know very well that upon occasions like this where even the common soldier is sensible

> of the reason of what he has to do, and especially of the joy and success of victory, soldiers with little entreaty will even outdo themselves, and march and fatigue double with cheerfulness what their officers would at other times compel them to.[1]

Marlborough replied to Slangenberg, "I am very glad . . . to find you are of my opinion, for this is my judgment of it too; I think we should march on, and I entreat you to go back and dispose your generals to it." Slangenberg, completely stultified by the event and furious at not having been a party to it, was only establishing somewhat cheaply a controversial position for the future. He rode off to Overkirk, but he never returned to Marlborough; and as the Dutch tents rose continuously upon the plain it became certain that they would not move that day.

A glance at the map will show that the confederates could have reached Louvain before Villeroy at any time on the 18th. They could probably have brought him to battle by marching towards Judoigne. The Elector, who waited and watched the scene from a distant eminence, realized to the full the plight of the French army, but

> when he observed the first tents pitching, he cried out three or four times in a rapture, "*Grace à Dieu, Grace à ciel,*" and then ordered his own troops to march without obliging them to keep in order, and make the best of their way to Louvain. They marched and marched all the night long, and yet though our army did not budge till next morning, our advanced squadrons and even some of our infantry came time enough to interrupt the rear of their army in crossing the river and to take some hundreds prisoners.[2]

That a fine opportunity had been lost, and whose was the fault, was long the subject of acrimonious discussion in the army and between the two wings of the army. Marlborough's officers blamed the Dutch, who, already offended at having been tricked into forcing the lines and being absent from the action, retorted with venom. They and Marlborough's enemies said

> that the pleasure of writing letters with an account of that day's great success to the Emperor, the Queen, the States and others, and with [of] signing warrants for safeguards of which above two hundred were writ and signed that afternoon took *people* [meaning Marlborough] up so much that they forgot to pursue the advantages which were certainly in their hands.[3]

[1] Major Cranstoun's letter, Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 253.

[2] *Loc. cit.* In fact nearly two thousand stragglers were captured on the 19th.

[3] *Loc. cit.*

It certainly seems that Marlborough flagged. Perhaps he was exhausted by the night march, by the clash of the cavalry charges, and by the peculiar mental strain of having to deceive both the enemy and his allies and on this intricate tangle to hazard the forcing of the lines. The carnage of the Schellenberg was fresh in his mind. He must certainly have braced himself to lose seven or eight thousand men, probably not to be supported, possibly to be repulsed. What would the outcry have been then? What would the Dutch have said, and what the Tories? He knew himself for a hunted man with foes on every side, longing for their opportunity, if he should but stumble, to drag him down and trample upon him. Yet if the allied cause were not to fail he had to scheme and dare. Once again he had dared, and once again he had won. Can we wonder that for a while under the reaction he bent and relaxed? One must not expect too much of mortal man. The vivifying force that flowed from him so generously and through such wearying years had its intermissions. It was not impossible to wear him down and drain the fountain dry. Another struggle with the Dutch, another forward bound with the army, another battle to be begun in the late afternoon—he had not got it in him. Let us discern his limitations as he paused and rested and thanked God that so far all was well.

If he had wielded the authority of Frederick the Great or Napoleon, or any of the commanders of armies in modern times, more than half his burden would have been lifted. Could he but have said to the generals who argued everything beforehand and criticized everything afterwards who had to be convinced, persuaded, wheedled, or even hoodwinked into every march and manœuvre, "Obey, or I will have you shot! Silence, or I will deprive you of your command!" it would be easy for us to fix his responsibility and blame. But at this time he had to work with and through at least twenty proud, jealous, competent or incompetent colleagues whom he had no effective power to discipline or punish. Cranstoun's very free-spoken letter shows the shrewd, instructed malice with which this crowd of professional rivals and critics could express themselves. It was for him to invent and urge, for them to cavil and oppose. It was for him to shoulder the responsibility. If disaster came, he by his rashness had caused it. If, in spite of all, there was success, why had he not turned it to better advantage? All the same, Marlborough had lost a chance.

An event of capital importance had, however, occurred. The piercing of the Lines of Brabant marked an important stage in the

world war. The stalemate in the northern theatre was ended, and henceforward much might happen there. The French abandoned Aerschot and Diest. They left Léau to an inevitable and speedy fate. The battalion of Monluc which garrisoned Tirlemont surrendered at discretion. Fifty miles of the lines, including the technically important salient, passed into the power of the allies. From Aerschot to the purlieus of Namur the famous front which had so long scared off attack and guarded the whole of Belgium was left for the conquerors to demolish. The tide of war flowed thirty miles farther to the west. These gains far exceeded the material prizes of action. But several notable leaders of the enemy and all the cannon on the field were captured, and the French forces were weakened by perhaps five or six thousand men. Counts d'Alègre and Horn, both lieutenant-generals, were prisoners of the English. But most important of all were the moral effects. The French knew themselves beaten and outmanœuvred. All the difficulties of their defensive were worsened and multiplied, and the advantages of the assailants proportionately improved. The destruction of the Lines of Brabant was an event which Europe recognized had definitely altered conditions in the main theatre of the war.

Marlborough's letters tell the tale of the next few days: but they afford us also an insight into his nature which is rare in these chronicles of war and affairs. In seeking to observe a man who always maintained such a majestic façade, the moments of weakness are fruitful. There is no doubt that, what with fatigue and relief and the hope that he had the next move in his hands, he gave way to rejoicing. He had won a double victory over his Dutch friends and his French foes. "I was forced to cheat them into it," he wrote. "He dared not offer to persuade the Deputies of the States," wrote Hare, "*but perfectly bubbled them into it.*" As for the enemy, their discomfiture was patent. His own delight sparkles in his letters. Most of all was he thrilled with the admiration and cheers of his troops. There is a boyish ring about his letters to Sarah. He felt very young that day. He writes rugged, strong English, not unworthy of the Shakespeare that was his main education.

John to Sarah

TIRLEMONT
July 18, 1705

. . . It is impossible to say too much good of the troops that were with me, for never men fought better. Having marched all night, and taken a good deal of pains this day, my blood is so hot that I can

hardly hold my pen; so that you will, my dearest life, excuse me if I say no more, but that I would not let you know my design of attacking the lines by the last post, fearing it might give you uneasiness; and now, my dearest soul, *my heart is so full of joy for this good success, that should I write more I should say a great many follies.*[1]

And two days later:

CAMP NEAR LOUVAIN
July 20

I was so pleased when I wrote my last, that if I had writ on I should have used expressions which afterwards I should have been ashamed of. *The kindness of the troops to me had transported me*, for I had none in this last action, but such as were with me last year; for M. Overkirk's army did not come till an hour after all was over. This was not their fault, for they could not come sooner; *but this gave occasion to the troops with me to make me very kind expressions, even in the heat of the action, which I own to you gives me great pleasure, and makes me resolve to endure anything for their sakes.*[2]

Marlborough to Godolphin

TIRLEMONT
July 18, 1705

. . . As I had in this action no troops with me but such as I brought from the Moselle, I believe the French will not care to fight with them again. This bearer will tell you that Monsieur Overkirk's army was not in the lines, till the whole action was over, *and that I was forced to cheat them into this action*; for they did not believe I would attack the lines, they being positive that the enemy were stronger than they [actually] were. But this is what must not be spoke of, for it would anger the Dutch, with whom, I think, at this time, I am very well, for their Deputies made me the compliment this afternoon that if I had not been here the lines would not have been forced. I intend to march to-morrow towards Louvain, by which march I shall see what Monsieur de Villeroy will do. This day has given me a great deal of pleasure; however I think 500 pounds is enough for the bearer.[3]

Marlborough to the Queen

CAMP NEAR LOUVAIN
July 23, 1705

MADAM,

I have had the honour of your majesty's letter of the 3d [14th], in which you are so extremely good, that I want words to express the sense I have of it; and as I am sure I would not only venture my life, but also sacrifice my quiet for you, so I beg you will believe that I

[1] Coxe, ii, 143. [2] *Ibid.*, 146.

[3] *Ibid.*, 144. Marlborough evidently knew that Colonel Parke had received £1000 for carrying the Blenheim dispatch.

shall never think myself master of taking any resolution till I have first obtained your majesty's leave. By my letters I have had from Holland, I find the Dutch are so pleased with the success we have had that I believe they will not now hearken to any proposals of peace without first acquainting your majesty. I do also hope that it may have some effect on the parties in England, for the advantage of your affairs, which I pray God may prosper as your own heart can desire, and then I am sure England must be happy.[1]

The effect produced upon Harley by the exploits of Elixem can be judged by the following letter, which should be remembered when we come to the later phases of their relationship.

Harley to Marlborough

July 28, 1705

Saturday col. Durel brought the good news of your grace's glorious action. . . .

You have, my lord, exceeded our very hopes or expectations, and no person could have done it but yourself. What I took the liberty to say to the queen upon this occasion is what I believe in my soul, that no subjects in the world have such a prince as the queen, and that no prince in the world hath such a subject as your grace.

Your friends and servants here cannot be without concern upon your grace's account when we hear *how much you expose* that precious life of yours *upon all occasions*,[2] and that you are not contented to do the part of a great general, but you condescend to take your share as a common soldier. I hope your lordship's unwearied care and unparalleled merit will in due time procure a lasting and sure peace for Europe, with repose and eternal renown to your grace.[3]

Meanwhile the operations had been checked. The rancours and reproaches that had arisen in the army were to wreck the rest of the campaign. It was evident that the next step was a left-handed movement across the Dyle. Swayed by the diverse emotions of the 18th, the Dutch generals made no objection to an attempt to force the passage of the river. All preparations were made for the 22nd. But now "great rains" descended, and "drowned all the meadows, by which we were to have marched to have gone over the Dyle."[4]

By the time the ground was dry again the resolution of the Council of War had also oozed away. By much patient pressure Marlborough obtained agreement to an attack upon the 29th. The

[1] Coxe, ii, 147. [2] Harley's italics. [3] Coxe, ii, 148–149

[4] Marlborough to Godolphin; Coxe, ii, 152.

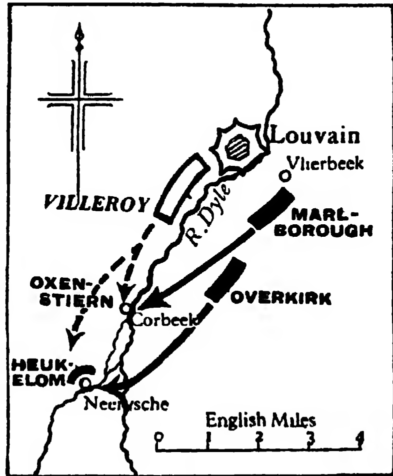
plan was conventional. He threatened the French on the north side of Louvain, and then sought by a long night march to cross the Dyle on the south side. But the feint to the north proved singularly ineffectual. Villeroy was not at all deceived by it. On the contrary, his only response to Marlborough's demonstration against his left was to strengthen his right. Dark suspicion arose about this in Marlborough's circle. Several letters assert that the French Marshal had exceptionally good information where the effort would be made. Of course, if fifteen or twenty generals have all to sit for hours round a table for several days debating in committee a deadly plan of war, there is bound to be a leak. Each member of the Council has two or three confidants, and these again often have others to whom they talk. The camps were infested with eavesdroppers. But the assertions of Hare, Cardonnel, Orkney, and others hint more than mere inadvertence.

However this may be, on the 29th the movement began. Marlborough, with Overkirk on his left, marched by night to the fords of the Dyle, preceded by strong advance guards with new copper pontoons. At daybreak, both Heukelom from the Dutch and Oxenstiern from Marlborough's army passed the river. Heukelom made much ground and established himself strongly. Oxenstiern made a bridgehead. The French, as soon as they saw the movement, marched to oppose the passage. There is little doubt it could have been effected, but by ill luck the English missed their way in the darkness and were two hours late in coming upon the scene. Thus it was the Dutch who were up to time and alone in a position to begin crossing the river at Neerysche. The easy success of Heukelom and the substantial lodgment which he had secured on the opposite bank should have encouraged them. But now Slangenberg led opinion at the Dutch headquarters against attempting the passage. Marlborough was in a weak position because the main part of his own army was still some distance away. He could not therefore commit the Dutch by making the passage on his own front. Cranstoun says:

> Our people loitered and were in suspense as it were in laying the bridges, and indeed they say that where they did lay them, the ground on either side was impracticable for cavalry. . . . However, they were but laying the second bridge about break of day, when the Duke came there himself and being, as it is said, asked by Brigadier Ferguson, who commanded in that detachment as Brigadier under Oxenstiern, why we halted as if we should not march on, the Duke made

him answer, grasping his hand, "Hold your tongue, you know nothing. I have given my word to do nothing without consent."[1]

He then rode the mile and a quarter to the Dutch headquarters, where the generals were gathered humming and hawing in a knot. Slangenberg immediately forced the issue. He accosted Marlborough with vehemence. He was heard to say, "Mon Dieu, my Lord, for God's sake, my Lord, don't . . ." and then drew him aside in voluble expostulation. Overkirk remained mute, but it was clear that negative views prevailed. The discussion, conducted with great formality, each speaking in his turn, dragged on. Marlborough had at length to avert a disaster for which he would have been made responsible. All the time the French were marching on. Heukelom with six battalions was well advanced on the far side of the river. He must either be supported in an action which would develop into a battle, or he must be withdrawn. Marlborough demanded a decision. Would they support him or not? The Council was unable to reach a conclusion. There were so many to be consulted, each with due regard to his rank and consequence. The French vanguard was already in contact, and their cannon had begun to play. Marlborough therefore left the group of babbling officers and sent one of his own aides-de-camp to Heukelom with an order to retire across the bridges forthwith. Heukelom, who had fastened his twelve battalions well into the hedges and ditches and looked for a good success, protested. Marlborough repeated his order in the most peremptory form. Heukelom withdrew raging, but with scarcely any loss. Oxenstiern, who had been for some time under serious fire, was made to conform. The whole confederate army then retreated about six miles. Slangenberg could boast that he had prevented a disaster, and could anyhow feel sure that he had baulked the English interloper. Such was the fiasco of the Dyle.



THE DYLE

[1] Major Cranstoun's letter, Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 254.

The bewilderment produced in the army by these proofs of indecision is clearly apparent in contemporary accounts. Noyes wrote:

August 10

★. . . Our aforesaid detachment came to the river, and under the cover of our cannon, which did great execution, laid six bridges. Colonel Godfrey with the Grenadiers of the four English battalions, passed over, as did also twelve of the Dutch battalions and beat all before them, cleared all the hedges and enclosed meadows and two villages, notwithstanding which Count Oxenstiern who commanded all the detachments ordered the remainder of them to halt, and those who now passed to return, and the Duke commanded the Copper boats to be taken up again, the reason of which is variously reported. Some said the States refused to expose their army any further; others that the ground was so morassy that our Horse could never have got over; 'tis allowed they were morassy where the Dutch had made their four bridges, but very good hard ground where the English had made their two. However, by this refusal of the Dutch General Officers the whole thing fell to the ground.[1]

One cannot feel that this was a good way to conduct war, or, indeed, any business that is liable to move rapidly. The eyes of Europe were upon Marlborough. Was he the greatest general of the age or only a lucky gambler? Was Blenheim an accident or a portent? Had he been a Royal Prince he would have been differently appraised. But an English Court favourite of humble origin must be judged severely. Here was his attempt to cross the Dyle mismanaged and a failure. He had marched out so boldly and then turned tail. He had wasted a fortnight of the campaigning season. Was not the man a fraud: and if so, said the Tories, was it not a public duty to expose him? All very annoying to the labouring Duke as he sat in his tent before Louvain and wondered how he could rescue order from confusion and action from futility. It is astonishing that he should have endured such prolonged and repeated vexations. There may have been greater Captains, but none was ever more plagued.

"I am now almost in despair," he wrote to Godolphin, "of having that advantage we ought to expect from our last success; for we have now been here nine days in sight of the enemy, the river Dyle only between us."

Hare says:

★Little did I imagine when I wrote last that a delay of twelve hours

[1] "Pocket Book of Dr Samuel Noyes" (MS.).

should have drawn after it one of so many days; much less that we should at the end of it miscarry and aim a blow we thought sure: who could have apprehended that an army which had overcome so successfully the greatest difficulties should have its progress stopped by a little rivulet? But Dyle they say in Scotch is devil, and so this paltry river has proved to us. . . . I believe I may add, it would have been done *if somebody had been away whose intolerable temper will let him know no Superior*. He cannot forgive the Duke the glory of passing the lines without letting him into the secret. . . .[1]

Godolphin, anxious to conciliate the Whig Junto without actually forcing one of them upon the Queen at her Council, had proposed to them that Sunderland should be the "man of quality" to be sent to mediate between the Emperor and the Hungarian rebels. This was no doubt a convenience to the Lord Treasurer, but the appointment created the worst impression at Vienna. It was arranged that the new envoy should visit his father-in-law on his way: and the interview was deemed indispensable to the public interest. He was to be warned not to irritate the Imperial Court, and to keep his Whig and Republican pedantry in proper restraint. He arrived at the camp just as the army was moving off into the night on their march to the Dyle. No dinner, no bed but the saddle! He must have made many grimaces. Hare says, ". . . He has jumped into all the hurry of the campaign at once. I believe twelve hours have given him enough of it."[2] Marlborough is jovial about this misfortune in the midst of his own vexations.

John to Sarah

MELDERT
July 30, 1705

*My Lord Sunderland came here last night, and I believe is spoyled for a soldier, not having leave to go to bed. I did verily believe we should have had a very considerable action this day; but by the backwardness of some of our friends and our misfortune of being two hours longer in our march than we ought to have been, the whole ended in a good deal of cannon and some small shot; but we lost very few men. If God intends us any more success, it must proceed from some occasion M. de Villeroy must give us. I am vexed, so that my heart is full, or I should not have been able to have said so much, I am so extremely tired.

The story of his personal encounter at Elixem spread with the tidings of that action. Although no generals in those days were

[1] Meldert, July 30. Blenheim MSS. [2] *Loc. cit.*

respected who did not go into danger with their troops, it was unusual for commanders-in-chief to charge with the cavalry like Eugene. Sarah was naturally agitated by the accounts she received. We have only John's letter in reply.

John to Sarah

MELDERT
August 6, 1705

My dearest soul I love you so well, and have set my heart so entirely on ending my days in quiet with you, that you may be so far at ease as to be assured that I never venture myself but when I think the service of my queen and country requires it. Besides I am now at an age when I find no heat in my blood that gives me temptation to expose myself out of vanity; but as I would deserve and keep the kindness of this army, I must let them see that when I expose them, I would not exempt myself.[1]

When every excuse has been made for the failure to use the brilliant passage of the Lines of Brabant, a very definite residue of criticism remains. In the sphere of war Marlborough was a creature of fire. But on the afternoon of the 18th the fire sank to a genial glow at which he warmed himself, instead of emitting fresh flames to destroy the foe.

[1] Coxe, ii, 147.

Chapter Twenty-six

THE UNFOUGHT WATERLOO

1705—AUGUST

OUR General resolved to make a final effort before the campaign ended. A peculiar quality of his manœuvres is the ease and exactness with which they can be explained to the lay reader. From the moment of his return to the Meuse Villeroy, although slightly the stronger, had yielded him the initiative. He had used it to pierce and render useless the Lines of Brabant. All the more after that did he enjoy the right to move; all the more were the French obliged to wait on his movements. In a country studded with fortresses the concession or loss of the initiative imposed grievous disadvantages upon the defenders. They could not tell where they would be hit. Therefore they had to garrison all their threatened fortresses and weaken their field army accordingly; while on the other hand Marlborough, master of the proceedings, could gather nearly all his troops into a striking force. His new plan was to advance deeply and suddenly into the enemy's country, so as to menace equally and at once a number of important places, and then, when Villeroy had been forced to detach troops for these, to fall upon his weakened army and destroy it in a battle.

After being baulked by Slangenberg and the Deputies at the Dyle, he sought freedom to carry out a fresh design which he had formed. The detail of his plan was contrary to many of the accepted conventions. He baked at Meldert five days' bread, and ordered from Liége a convoy of six days' biscuit. He also brought from Liége a considerable siege train, including ten twenty-four pounders and sixteen mortars. To aid in the dispersion of the French he reinforced Baron Spaar on the sea-coast to the north with four battalions and directed him to raid the enemy country between Bruges and Ghent. He wrote to Godolphin:

MELDERT
August 3, 1705

I have sent Lieutenant-General Hompesch once more to The Hague. . . . You will see that I have a mind to serve them if they please;

> but if they should not allow of what I propose, it is impossible to act offensively; for besides the danger of resolving everything that is to be done in a council of war, *which cannot be kept so secret, but that the enemy must know it time enough to prevent it, as we had the experience of in our last undertaking,* so monsieur Slangenberg, though he is a brave man, his temper is such that there is no taking measures with him. I am so tired that I cannot answer yours at this time.[1]

Hompesch returned with an absurd compromise. The field Deputies were instructed to permit the Captain-General to make two or three marches without summoning a council of war. At the same time Marlborough was not to bring the army to any serious engagement without the approval of both Overkirk and the Deputies.

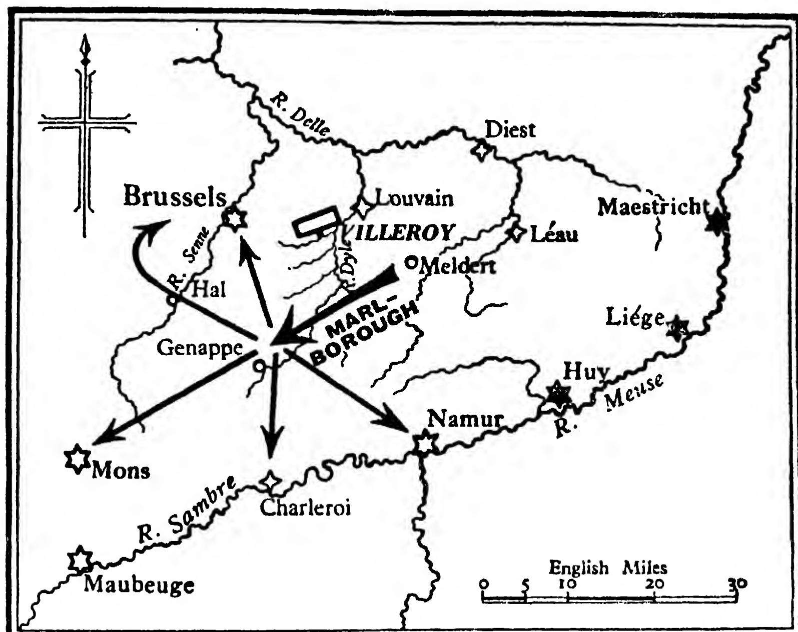
In spite of these insensate restrictions, Marlborough determined to persevere. He hoped by his three free marches to create a situation in which either the enemy would make a battle inevitable, or his advantage over the enemy would be so obvious that even the Dutch could not deny him. On this basis therefore he decided to take his hampering chance over and above the deadly hazards of war. On August 13 the biscuit convoy reached Meldert from Liége. Marlborough had now acquired eleven days' manœuvring power in many directions without regard to his own communications. On the 15th he marched southward to Corbaix, with Overkirk keeping pace with him on his left. On the 16th he moved on to Genappe, crossing the headstreams of the Dyle. On the 17th he turned north along the Brussels road towards Waterloo. The three marches "in scorching hot weather"[2] totalled thirty-three miles.

Villeroy and the Elector, encamped between Louvain and Brussels, saw with astonishment this movement of the whole confederate army across and round their front. They had heard from sure sources that the convoy of biscuit had been kept loaded on the wagons, and that Marlborough was carrying with him the batteries for besieging fortresses. They saw that he had let go his communications with Liége: these were now exposed to their attack if they cared to pay the price of battle. They preferred to await events. They must now be concerned for the safety of five fortresses, Namur, Charleroi, Mons, Ath, and above all the weakly defended Brussels. A report, based on the intercepted letter of a member of the States-General, had also reached them that Marlborough intended to pass the Senne at Hal and march right round them to the attack of Dendermonde, thus placing himself between them and Antwerp.

[1] Coxe, ii, 161.

[2] Blackadder, p. 260.

Both Villeroy and—when they were informed—the main headquarters at Versailles were unable to understand the purpose and hardihood of such manœuvres. That a commander should be prepared to sever his communications and move so large an army encumbered by a siege train and heavy convoy across their front



MARLBOROUGH THREATENS THE FORTRESSES

into their fortress zone was a departure from every canon of the military art deserving the severest punishment. However, since Marlborough was known to be seeking a battle and they were not anxious to fight, they did not try to exact the forfeits which they conceived were their due. Instead, as he had expected, they submitted to his will. They assigned a strong garrison to Louvain and detached Grimaldi with eighteen battalions, twelve squadrons, and ten guns to support a Colonel Pasteur, who with a small force was barring the road from Waterloo to Brussels. They moved their main army slightly to its right in order to be nearer Grimaldi. They still remained in their central position between Louvain and Brussels; but they were completely mystified about Marlborough's intentions, and the dispersion of their army was far advanced.

Churchill was in it. This use of a large detached corps of manœuvre as an integral part of the main battle was hitherto unexampled in the European war.

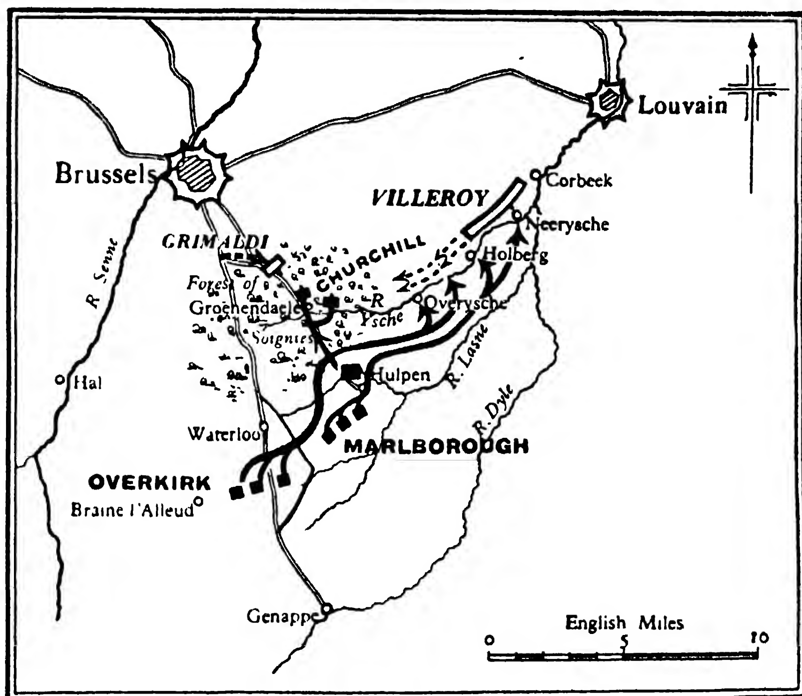
"There was also a stratagem to be used," wrote Blackadder,

> which, if it had taken effect, would probably have decided the battle in our favour. There were twenty battalions (ours was one), and horse conform[able], that were to march through a wood and post ourselves quietly in the wood till we should hear that the battle was fully joined. Then we were to come out and attack them in the rear. Accordingly we marched at three in the morning, and posted ourselves in the wood, where we stayed till three in the afternoon. General Churchill commanded us. . . .[1]

All the rest of the confederate forces were meanwhile rapidly approaching and deploying. But let us see what were the armies now, it seemed, to be matched together in decisive conflict. With the reinforcement he had already received from the Moselle, Villeroy had under his command 103 battalions and 147 squadrons. Of these he could now only marshal (including Grimaldi) 76 battalions and 127 squadrons. All the rest had been drawn from him piecemeal by the various pressures and anxieties we have described. Marlborough had, on the other hand, concentrated 100 battalions and 162 squadrons; or more than four men to three for the operation, and much more upon the actual front of his attack. We have seen him eager to fight Villars with four men to five, and victorious at Blenheim with ten men to eleven. Later both at Ramillies and at Oudenarde he was slightly inferior. Always he welcomed a trial on equal terms. This was the only battle except the Schellenberg which he planned or fought where he had a large superiority in numbers. His combinations had been entirely successful. Every forecast he had made of the psychological effect which his marches would produce upon the enemy was vindicated. First he had compelled their strategical dispersion throughout the theatre of war; and secondly their tactical dispersion on the chosen battlefield. Not only had they been forced to weaken their army to guard so many threatened points, but now, at the moment of action, they were drawn out on a front larger than their force could cover, their main position divided by a dangerous ravine, and with an important part of their army under Grimaldi completely out of joint. Superiority of numbers, the confusion visible in the French lines—troops moving forward, backward, now here, now there—the proximity

[1] Blackadder, p. 262.

of the Dutch, and above all the death-dealing position in which Churchill and his corps stood, all encouraged a just confidence. Marlborough had still eight days' food in his wagons and could manœuvre or pursue with exceptional freedom. It was with a glow of inward satisfaction that he began about nine o'clock his customary close, personal reconnaissance of the hostile front.



AUGUST 18

When Villeroy and the Elector understood that they were about to be assaulted by the violent Duke at the head of a much larger army, their first impulse was to retreat to Brussels. Considering the dangers of combining a flank march and a rearguard action, they decided to fight it out. Forthwith they began to fortify the villages behind the Ysche and to array their troops for a dire struggle. Marlborough meanwhile had discerned four practicable points of attack.[1] These are shown on the plan. Prying closely at one of them, he was fired upon by a battery, and when the cannon-balls

[1] Hare Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 205.

sang through the air or smote the ground amid his staff, he remarked complacently, "These gentlemen do not choose to have this spot too narrowly inspected."

By the time he reached the end of the front Overkirk arrived, and Marlborough, bound first of all to convince him, took the old Dutchman over the dangerous ground. Overkirk agreed to fight. Thus the first condition of the States-General was established. Indeed, Marlborough had actually issued orders for his infantry to seize the weakly defended passage near Holberg, when he learned that his artillery had been delayed on the march, and forbore pending its arrival.

Hare's narrative already quoted gives a reason, perhaps of prejudice, for its delay.

> ★The army was formed in line of battle and our artillery had been up at the same time *if the person* [Slangenberg] *who had so great a hand in the miscarriage of the last attempt had not resolved that this should succeed no better.* Notwithstanding the wheel baggage had been ordered to Wavre, and there had been the strictest directions that nothing should be suffered to break into the march of the train, this gentleman would bully the officer that commanded it, and broke their march to make way for his baggage, which made it four o'clock before the artillery could come up.[1]

The deployment of the army was steadily proceeding wnen, at about noon, Marlborough met the Field Deputies. He greeted them with confidence. "Gentlemen, I congratulate you on the prospect of a glorious victory." He invited their assent to an immediate attack. They curled up. "Your Highness will doubtless allow us to request the opinion of our generals." Although this demand was outside the resolution of the States-General, Marlborough had foreseen that it would be made. He bowed to it. Strong in the support of Overkirk, the Dutch Commander-in-Chief, and in the splendour of the opportunity, he braced himself for confrontation with subordinates. It was some time before they could be assembled on the high ground opposite Overysche. His words have been recorded by Dr Hare, who was at his side. "Gentlemen, I have reconnoitred the ground, and made dispositions for an attack. I am convinced that conscientiously, and as men of honour, we cannot now retire without an action. Should we neglect this opportunity, we must be responsible before God and man. You see

[1] Hare's letter of August 20. Blenheim MSS.

the confusion which pervades the ranks of the enemy, and their embarrassment at our manœuvres. I leave you to judge whether we should attack to-day or wait till to-morrow. It is indeed late, but you must consider that by throwing up entrenchments during the night, the enemy will render their position far more difficult to force."

There was a sullen murmur, and then Slangenberg—"that beast Slangenberg," as Hare calls him—broke out, "Since I have been led to this place without any previous communication of the design, I will give no other opinion than that the passage at Overysche is impracticable. However, I am ready to obey the orders which I may receive." Marlborough fastened on the last sentence. "I am happy to have under my command an officer of your courage and skill, and I flatter myself that in a situation which requires instant decision you will start no difficulties." It is sometimes possible to induce a contumacious person to act by giving him charge of the action to which he objects. Accordingly Marlborough proposed to Slangenberg that he should himself direct the attack upon Overysche. Slangenberg was not to be cajoled. "Murder and massacre!" he muttered in audible tones. Of course it would be the Dutch who would be sacrificed. "No," replied Marlborough, "I will place two English battalions at the side of every Dutch one." This must have involved a considerable dislocation of the front. But Slangenberg only rejoined that he did not understand English. "German battalions then," replied the Captain-General. Slangenberg fell back upon his assertion that the attack was impracticable. "Then I will lead it myself," said Marlborough. "I will not send troops to dangers which I will not myself encounter."[1] To this there could be no answer.

He then appealed again to the Deputies. The Deputies turned obdurately away and formed a circle with the generals, where they all stood growling together for about two hours, while the French dug and the day wore on. There is hardly any picture like this in war annals. This cluster of men, shamefaced but stubborn, shifting from one leg to the other, shaking their heads and repeating their arguments while their so-called Commander-in-Chief, humiliated, defied, stood or paced up and down a little way off, now breaking in with words of conciliation and then with words of wrath. But they all knew that if they talked long enough the matter would settle itself as they meant. And here surely Overkirk, from whom history

[1] Hare's letter of August 20. Blenheim MSS.; Coxe, ii, 168.

will not withdraw a friendly regard, ought to have made his authority felt by his own Dutch officers. He had agreed to the attack. Should he not have said, "I have given my opinion to the field Deputies and I cannot allow my officers to contradict me"? But Overkirk, though worth the lot, was old. He was alone among his fellow-countrymen. Faithful in thought and action, he lacked personal dominance. He subsided. If the Duke could not persuade them to it, who could?

The afternoon was now far advanced. Some of the generals had safeguarded themselves by saying that they could not pronounce a final opinion without inspecting the actual points of attack themselves. Slangenberg then proposed that a delegation should make a personal reconnaissance. It was agreed that Slangenberg, Salisch, and Tilly should compose it. The chance of the day was now gone. To-morrow the line of the Ysche would be a fortification. Still, Marlborough named three of his officers to accompany them. Count Noyelles could not trust himself to ride in courtesy with Slangenberg. But Bothmar and Starck complied. As they toured the line the Dutchmen dwelt at every point upon the dangers and difficulties of the attack. Slangenberg claimed that Starck admitted the position to be three times as strong as Höchstädt. But this is denied. Slangenberg then made the offensive remark that "the attack at Höchstädt had been regarded as an imprudence and censured as such by many." Upon this Marlborough's two officers without a word turned their horses and rode away. The remainder of the delegation returned to make their report. Slangenberg seems to have expected that Marlborough would be anxious to renew the argument with him. In this he was disappointed. "... And as we came to make our report to the Veldt-Marshal, of what we had seen," he wrote in his justification, "and came into the road which was bordered on both sides by tall hedges behind which the Veldt-Marshal had camped, the Duke of Marlborough passed before us without speaking to us."[1] He added a reference to Overkirk which did himself harm in Holland when the account was published. "After that we came to the Veldt-Marshal, *whom we found sleeping in his coach*, to whom we made our report, and heard no more talk that night nor the following day of attacking the enemy."[2]

What followed is well told in Marlborough's letters. The first is written on the eve of the crisis, and conceals its imminence from his wife.

[1] Slangenberg to Fagel, August 27, 1705; Lamberty, iii, 487. [2] *Loc. cit.*

John to Sarah

LOWER WAVRE
August 17, 1705

We shall march again to-morrow; for we cannot stay longer in this country than the bread we bring with us will give us leave. I hope in a week or ten days I shall have more leisure than I have now, and then I am resolved to drink the Spa waters. I wish with all my heart those of Tunbridge may do you good; and then I am sure the first summer I am with you I shall desire to go thither with you, and then I believe the waters will do me good; for till I am pleased and at ease with you no waters nor anything else will do me good.[1]

August 19

When I had writ this far, I took the resolution of not letting the post go, believing I should have engaged the enemy yesterday, which I certainly had done if it had been in my power. But all the Dutch generals, except M. Overkirk, were against it, so that the Deputies would not consent to our engaging, notwithstanding we were in battle, within cannon-shot of the enemy; and I do assure you that our army were at least one-third stronger than theirs. We are now returning; for we cannot stay longer than the bread we have brought with us will give us leave. It is impossible to make the war with advantage at this rate. I have sent a copy of my letter to the States to lord treasurer. I should have writ in a very angry style, but I was afraid it might have given the French an advantage.[2]

Marlborough to Godolphin

LOWER WAVRE
August 19, 1705

You will see by the enclosed to the States that after four days' march, I found the enemy encamped as I expected, so that I thought we should have had a very glorious day. But as the Deputies would not consent without first consulting the generals, who were all against it, except M. Overkirk, we have been obliged to retire from the enemy, notwithstanding we were at least one-third stronger than they, which I take to be very prejudicial to the common cause, and scandalous for the army. I think this will shew very plainly that it is next to impossible to act offensively with this army, so governed as they are; for when their general and I agree, as we did in this, that it shall be in the power of subaltern generals to hinder the execution, is against all discipline. This last action of the Dutch generals has given us great mortification; for the enemy will see very plainly that they have nothing to fear on this side, nor can I ever serve with them without losing the little reputation I have; for in most countries they

[1] Hare's letter. Blenheim MSS. [2] Coxe, ii, 170.

think I have power in this army to do what I please. I beg you will give my duty to the queen, and assure her that if I had had the same power I had the last year I should have had a greater victory than that of Blenheim, in my opinion; for the French were so posted that if we had beat them they could not have got to Brussels.[1]

On the same day he sent his formal report to the States-General:

. . . Yesterday we were in motion before daybreak and after passing several defiles we came into fairly open country [*une assez grande campagne*] having found the enemy as we expected them between Overysche and Neerysche with the little stream of the Ysche before them. At noon or a little afterwards all our army was ranged in battle, and, having examined with M. Overkirk the four posts which I wished to attack, I flattered myself already, in view of the goodness and superiority of our troops, to be able soon to congratulate Their High Mightinesses upon a glorious victory. But at the last moment when nothing remained but to attack, it was not judged advisable to seek a decision [*pousser l'affaire*]. . . . I am sure that the Deputies will explain to Your High Mightinesses the reasons which were presented to them on both sides, and at the same that they will do justice to M. Overkirk in stating that he shared my feeling that the occasion was too good to throw away. I submitted however, although with much regret.

He added a postscript of severe protest.

My heart is so full that I cannot refrain from representing on this occasion to Your High Mightinesses that I find myself here with far less authority than when I had the honour to command Their troops last year in Germany.[2]

Thus set the star of the Dutch Republic. It is vain to plead that nine months later, only a score of miles away, the victory of Ramillies destroyed Villeroy's army and regained Belgium, and that still the war went on. Time is inexorable. Had Marlborough won the unfought battle of Waterloo in August 1705, all the French power in the Netherlands would have been thereby annihilated. The French stood with their faces towards France, just as the Dutch looked towards Holland. In such a situation there could have been no recovery in the Low Countries for the defeated side. Marlborough would have acquired that supreme authority which he always lacked to plan the campaign of 1706. He would have been there to execute the great projects which we shall presently unfold, unless even better had presented themselves. The year of victory, 1706, might also have been the year of peace. But the Dutch wore

[1] Coxe, ii, 176. [2] *Dispatches*, ii, 223.

out Fortune with their sluggish precautions. Six or seven separate times, for reasons which no instructed modern soldier would tolerate, they "feared their fate too much," and paralysed the genius which could have delivered them. Not all their courage, their sacrifices, and their dauntless constancy could appease the insulted gods. Long and bloody years of struggle lay before them. They were to see their cherished Blue Guards mown down under their own prince at Malplaquet. Their Deputies were even to beg Marlborough to fight a battle against his better judgment in 1711—and beg in vain. They were to exhaust their wealth in a seemingly interminable series of campaigns. Their sea-power and their share in the New World were to pass insensibly, but irresistibly and soon, to England. In the end Marlborough, serviceable, grand, helpful, would fall victim to the English parties, and England, now so fierce and ardent, would sicken of an endless war, desert her allies, and leave them to their fate. But if the valiant Republic, to whom Protestant civilization owes an inestimable debt, was to be deprived of its fruition in modern times, condemned for ever to be a minor Power while rivals grew so great, this was the fatal scene. Here by the cross-roads of bodeful Waterloo, as earlier upon the heaths of Peer, the destinies of Holland turned; and upon that milestone there may well be inscribed the not otherwise noticeable name of Slangenberg.

Chapter Twenty-seven

THE MORTIFIED ADVENTURER

1705—SEPTEMBER

MARLBOROUGH'S wrath and protest caused wide spread commotion. A long swell rolled across England, Marlborough knew that in fastening a reproach upon the Dutch he would find a ready response. The Whigs, the advocates of vigorous war, were bound to support it. The Tories marched up eager for a quarrel with those Continental obstructionists and shirkers for whom English citizens had sacrificed too much already. The Queen shared these sentiments with spontaneous warmth, and the Cabinet responded. Harley, as Secretary of State and Speaker, gave full vent to the national mood. For the Dutch formal processes were prepared. A nobleman of the highest standing should be sent as Envoy Extraordinary to the States to protest before the world at the treatment the Captain-General of the joint armies had received. Lord Pembroke was actually selected for this grave mission. The feelings of the magnates and legislators were voiced in rough form and to a most unusual degree, not only by the well-to-do citizens and country gentlefolk, but by the populace. Blenheim sunk throughout the year ever deeper into the national mind. Here was this accursed war which they must fight and which they must win or else be made "slaves and Papists." Here was their own English General who had the secret of victory, whose sword could deliver them from the toils. And here were these pinchbeck princes of Germany and money-grubbing burghers of Holland who would not allow him to strike the blow that would free them all from the heavy, harsh yoke. Gallas, accustomed to the eddies of Court intrigue, was astonished by contact with a national force not understood at all in Central Europe. "These people here," he reported to the Emperor, "can be content with nothing but battle and bloodshed."[1] He had not the wit to add that this was because they wanted to win and end the war, and had a sound military instinct as to how it might

[1] Gallas's dispatch of August 4.

be done. But what a contrast our country now presented, after four years of high taxation and onerous warfare, with the England of 1701! Then the only care of the Parliament was to abolish the armed forces, and to make it plain for all to see that England would never fight again in a Continental war. How King William would have marvelled and also rejoiced if he could have seen the vision of the pacifist island which four years of Marlborough had made consciously and unitedly the drill-sergeant of Europe!

Marlborough continued to express his disappointment in all quarters. He proclaimed his reproaches to the whole circle of the Alliance. To Godolphin he wrote (August 27):

> . . . I have reason to believe that Slangenberg has resolved to give all the hindrance he could to whatever should be proposed, so that you may see how the common cause is like to thrive, *when it is in the power of a roman catholic of his temper* to hinder whatever may be designed. This makes it impossible for me to serve with these people; for I take it for granted their constitution will not allow them to give us such power as for the good of the service I ought to have; so that the next year's project ought to be so made, as that the Dutch army in this country may be on the defensive, by which all the other armies may be put in a condition to act offensively.[1]

John to Sarah

TIRLEMONT
August 31, 1705

> I have so many things that vex me that I am afraid the waters, which I think to begin to-morrow, will not do me much good. That I may be the more quiet during this siege of Léau, I have taken my quarters in this town, and will trouble myself with business as little as possible. My letters from The Hague tell me that the factions there are divided concerning the last disappointment I had. Those that are for a peace think their generals acted prudently; but the others are angry with them and their Deputies, so that it is with them as with us in England, they judge by parties. . . . But if it be possible they have more faction than we have, by which we may fear every thing.
>
> It is impossible for me to express how much I long for the end of this campaign, for I have no prospect of any thing considerable that can be done, unless the French will take heart and offer at something [*i.e.*, battle].[2]

Marlborough to Godolphin

TIRLEMONT
August 31, 1705

> You do in yours complain of some things at home; but if you could

[1] Coxe, ii, 177. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 182.

> know all I suffer here abroad, you would agree with me in begging of the queen that I might never more go out of England. . . . In Holland the people . . . *are of my side against their generals.* By this you may see how difficult a part I have to act, being obliged to take care that neither the French nor Dutch common people know how I am used; for it is most certain I have not the tenth part of the authority I had last year; and it is as certain that if I had had the power of fighting, with the blessing of God the French must have been beaten. By all this you will easily believe me that I shall make it my endeavour to be in England early. But if any misfortune should happen to the army after I were gone, I should never forgive myself; for, though I am used ill, the public must not suffer. . . .[1]

On September 1 there arrived a letter from Harley expressing his sympathy. "The queen upon reading your grace's letter," he wrote, "ordered the lords immediately to be summoned; they were all of opinion to advise the queen to take notice of this to the States, in regard not only to the public service, but also what is due to your grace's great merit, to which such usage is very inconsistent."[2] He then explained the plan of Lord Pembroke's mission of protest. Marlborough saw in a moment that this would be regarded throughout Holland as a national insult. He was at the height of his vexation, but he kept his head even in anger. He rejected the proposal at once. He wrote:

> From the knowledge and experience I have of these people, that while they are in such a ferment on this very occasion, and that there are such divisions reigning amongst them, I can no ways think it for the public good or her majesty's service, as believing it might rather give an advantage to the French, and those that wish them well, or at least that are over-forward for a peace. . . .[3]

On the same day (September 2) he wrote to Sarah, "But really my spirit is so broke, that whenever I can get from this employment, I must live quietly or die."[4]

Meanwhile the recriminations in the Army had risen to a dangerous height. Marlborough's letter of August 19 to the States-General, with its accusing postscript, was published even before it was considered by the Assembly. The disclosure was traced to the English Mission at The Hague, and there is little doubt that the Minister, Stanhope, had acted upon Marlborough's instructions. The anger of the British Government and the proposal to protest

[1] Coxe, ii, 183. [2] *Ibid.*, 178–179. [3] *Ibid.*, 180–181. [4] *Ibid.*, 184.

by a special envoy also became known throughout Holland. There was a crisis of public opinion, and for some days the preponderance was not clear. The peace party naturally took the side of the Dutch generals and Deputies, and the States-General gave prominence to peace talk as an effective counter to the grievances of their ally. Nevertheless, for a space Marlborough did not restrain the resentments which burned within him. Nor was this without a definite purpose. Slangenberg must go. If he remained with the army after what had happened the authority of the Captain-General was at an end. Unless an example were made it was vain to persevere in the campaign. Slangenberg was a national hero in Holland, and he had the whole weight of the Dutch generals and field Deputies on his side. For a fortnight the tension was extreme.

To be rid of Slangenberg Marlborough assigned to him the siege of Léau with fifteen battalions and as many squadrons. Slangenberg, apparently sure of his position, refused unless he were given thirty battalions. The duty was therefore entrusted to General Dedem. The fortress surrendered a week later as soon as the batteries were planted. The publication of Marlborough's protest drew from Slangenberg and the Dutch Deputies lengthy explanations of their conduct, some of which were widely circulated. But now the voice of the Dutch people was heard from many quarters. They declared themselves on Marlborough's side and against their fellow-countryman. Rotterdam led the popular movement: Amsterdam, where the peace party at first was strong, underwent a swift change. The burghers beset the council house with demands "that more attention should be paid to the Duke of Marlborough's advice." Feeling was not less vehement at The Hague. Shrewsbury, who passed through Holland that winter, used that grim phrase which every functionary in the Republic understood only too well. He wrote that if Slangenberg had been seen in the streets he would have been "de-Witted." The storm grew among the masses of the common people, and the magnates bowed to it. Slangenberg, astonished and abashed, withdrew on the plea of ill-health to Maestricht and afterwards to Aix-la-Chapelle.

According to Cranstoun,

> General Churchill hearing that he [Slangenberg] spoke too freely and disrespectfully of his brother, and being informed that these [his] letters were detracting from the Duke's reputation, sent Brigadier Palmes to him to tell him that if these things were as he was informed,

> he expected to meet him and find satisfaction; and if it was otherwise, he expected he should show his letters to Mr Palmes.[1]

Palmes was the cavalryman who had done so well against the Gendarmerie at Blenheim, and was one of the younger officers whom Marlborough was advancing. Slangenberg showed him the letters and denied that he had ever spoken unbecomingly of the Duke, and on this the matter dropped. Here Slangenberg passes out of the story. He was never employed again in any military command. This closing incident shows, however, how acute the controversy had become among the armies. Cranstoun says, "The dryness grew to so great a height that it was like an open breach." One must admit that "dryness" is not a term which fails through excess.

We do not know precisely what assurances Marlborough received from Heinsius and the Dutch leaders. It is certain that up till September 9 he was still hot in his pursuit of Slangenberg. Cardonnel's bulletin of August 19 had contained the words:

> About noon our army was formed in order of battle, and my lord the Duke of Marlborough having with M. Overkirk visited the posts they resolved to attack, were accordingly giving orders to the troops to advance, with every prospect of success, but the Deputies and the States, having consulted with their other generals, would not give their consent so that it was given over.[2]

Upon the remonstrances of Vryberg, the Dutch Ambassador, this passage had been omitted from the *Gazette*, making the account entirely colourless. The following remarkable letter shows Marlborough's indignation at this suppression.

Marlborough to Godolphin

TIRLEMONT
Sept. 9, 1705

> After I had sealed this letter, Mr Cardonnel shewed me the Gazette, in which I think I am used very hardly. I send you the paper he wrote by that post, by which you will see what was left out, which I think the writer of the Gazette would not have ventured to have done if he had not had orders for it. If I had not had more regard for the public than for myself, I should have writ more plainly the truth, of the unreasonable disappointment I met with that day, which if I had, I am very confident the common people of Holland would have done me justice; but that would have given great advantage to the French, which was reason enough for me to avoid doing it. But I am much mortified

[1] October 1, Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 255. [2] Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, i, 75.

to see that an English gazette has more care not to offend monsieur Vryberg than to do me justice. They have but to see this gazette in Holland, and they will have reason to lay aside any farther thoughts of making new regulations for the giving more authority to the general that shall command, which I hope her majesty will have so much goodness for me as to let it be some other person; for *I am very sure I must be madder than any body in Bedlam if I should be desirous of serving when I am sure that my enemies seek my destruction, and that my friends sacrifice my honour to their wisdom.*[1]

"The Duke of Marlborough," wrote Godolphin to Harley on receipt of this, "shows more concern and trouble than I have known him to do on almost any other occasion."[2] Profuse apologies were tendered by both Secretaries of State. But it was the departure and downfall of Slangenberg which appeased the injured commander. By September 14 he had evidently gained his point. He had appealed against the functionaries to the people. Satisfied upon the essential, he was among the first to be alarmed by the vehement response. No one saw more plainly than he the peril with which the passions he had been forced to unleash threatened the Grand Alliance. He could probably have withdrawn the British Army from the Continental war and returned home amid the plaudits of an angry and short-sighted nation. But this was the conclusion which he most feared and hated. He had tested his strength in England and found it superabundant. All this foreign talk of his being a rash general who had had a lucky fluke, and set his somewhat amateur opinions against the experts of European warfare, counted for nothing in his native land. Queen, Parliament, and people brushed it aside with an instinctive gesture. Slangenberg was gone. The Duke now exerted himself to allay the storm he had aroused. That wind had been felt in every allied Court from The Hague to Vienna. His authority prevailed. The Queen was soothed, the Cabinet was cooled, and Parliament and the people were allowed to simmer down.

In the midst of these trials Marlborough's poise was undisturbed. He would always go out of his way to do a kindness—"where the service does not suffer by it." With the world, he loved a lover.

Marlborough to Godolphin

TIRLEMONT
Sept. 10

The enclosed is a letter from a young woman of quality that is in love with the Comte de Lyon.[3] He is at Litchfield. I am assured that

[1] Coxe, ii, 186. [2] September 5, Bath Papers, *loc. cit.*
[3] One of the Blenheim prisoners of war.

it is a very virtuous love, and that when they can get their parents' consent, they are to be married. As I do from my heart wish that nobody were unhappy, I own to you that this letter has made me wish him in France, so that if he might have leave for four months, without prejudice to her majesty's service, I should be glad of it; but if you think it should not be done, you will then be pleased not to speak to the queen of it.[1]

The Queen endeavoured to cheer her General. She wrote:

WINCHESTER
Sept. 6/17

I am very sorry to find, by your letters to lord treasurer, you are so very much in the spleen. I own all the disagreeable things you have met with this summer are a very just cause for it, and I am very much concerned for the uneasiness you are under; but yet I cannot help hoping, that for the good of your country and the sake of your friends, who cannot support themselves without you, you will be persuaded to banish your melancholy thoughts. . . .[2]

And Eugene, in a letter which arrived about the end of September, wrote:

TREVIGLIO
Sept. 13

I profit by this opportunity of assuring your highness of the interest I take in the success of your arms. It is extremely cruel that opinions so weak and discordant should have obstructed the progress of your operations, when you had every reason to expect so glorious a result. I speak to you as a sincere friend. You will never be able to perform any thing considerable with your army unless you are absolute, and I trust your highness will use your utmost efforts to gain that power in future. *I am not less desirous than yourself to be once more united with you in command.*[3]

The event turned gradually in Marlborough's favour. Pembroke's mission was abandoned by the Cabinet. The States wrote to their Deputies and generals:

. . . So as that their generals are not pleased, for they would now have their army fight. I am afraid there will not be an opportunity for it; but should an occasion offer, I do verily believe every body would consent to it, now that we have the happiness of not having Slangenberg, he being gone to Maestricht; and I do, with all my heart, pray to God that I may never be in an army with him.[4]

[1] Coxe, ii, 188. [2] *Ibid.*, 189. [3] *Ibid.*, 190.
[4] Marlborough to Godolphin, September 14; Coxe, ii, 191.

There is no doubt that the Dutch were deeply distressed. It was true that Louis XIV was busy with proposals for a separate peace. Terms most favourable to the Republic were offered. Barriers, securities, trade—lucrative trade—were laid before them. Why should they, the French whispered, exhaust themselves for this blood-thirsty island and for the vanity and ambition of a single man, risen from nothing, who wished to make awful experiment in war? But the cause held good. The Dutch were as much alarmed by the French blandishments as by the English anger. They, like Marlborough, realized that their road lay together. There had grown up around Marlborough a curious affiliation in Amsterdam. Those who would not deal with Heinsius would work for Heinsius' policy through him. Buys, the Pensionary of Amsterdam—so lately a leader of the peace faction—volunteered, and was eagerly chosen, to wait upon Marlborough in his camp and offer him satisfaction for the past and assurances for the future. There must be a reconciliation: after all, no one doubted that the Captain-General was the appointed guide. No one could express their affection and his worth to them. If only he did not demand such horrible and dangerous gambling warfare!

On the 21st Buys arrived at headquarters to express the regrets of the States-General. He promised that Marlborough should never be asked to serve the Republic again under the conditions of the last campaign. The obnoxious personalities should be removed. Trust would be reposed in the Commander-in-Chief.

"Pensioner Buys," Marlborough wrote to Godolphin (September 24), "has confirmed me in my opinion that the constitution of the States is such that they cannot take away the power the Deputies have had at all times in the army; for in the king's time they had the same authority, but he took care *to choose such men as always agreed to whatever he had a mind to*. Now this may, if they please, be put again in practice, but can never be done by a treaty. I have also underhand [confidential] assurances that they will never employ Slangenberg in the army where I may be. By the whole I find they would be very glad to content me, but, I am afraid, would be glad also to have it still in their power to hinder a battle, for they do seem to apprehend very much the consequences of such a venture."[1]

The care which Marlborough had taken to strengthen the Rhine secured the Margrave a substantial superiority over the French. Nevertheless Villars, reinforcing and later replacing Marsin,

[1] Coxe, ii, 192.

developed a vigorous campaign. He stormed Kron-Weissemburg and regained the line of the Lauter. He reoccupied Homburg and rebuilt its fortifications. The Margrave continued to nurse his foot, against which his debilitated constitution could make no headway, and to supervise the laying out of his gardens at Rastadt, the blooming of which he was never to see. Meanwhile his conduct was under critical review at Vienna. The new Emperor was almost resolved to face the grave embarrassments of removing him when, at the end of August the ailing general made a vigorous effort to retrieve his reputation. With a superiority of nearly seven to five he advanced suddenly across the Lauter, and recaptured Hagenau and the whole line of the Moder. This exploit was worthy of his former career. It quashed the adverse proceedings on foot against him at the Imperial Court. Villars, arriving after the misfortune, drew out in full array and offered battle. But the Margrave was content with what had been achieved. He treated the French demonstrations with a contempt which Klopp assures us was well founded, and rejoiced in the fact that, while the enemy were thus vaingloriously parading, a large provision train had been successfully received. The relative strengths of the opposing armies show the different standards by which Villars measured Marlborough and the Margrave. At Sierck, although he was at least five to four, he had refused battle to Marlborough, but upon the Moder he challenged the Margrave with only six to seven. His bid was not accepted. Thus the campaign ended with a confederate success upon the Upper Rhine which was, however, inadequate to the forces employed.

It should be added that by orders from Berlin the powerful Prussian contingent was withdrawn from the Margrave's army on the eve of his attack on the lines of Hagenau, and that the Margrave considered this an evil turn which Marlborough had done him. The truth is that Marlborough, thinking that he might need the Prussians in Flanders and that they were being kept idle on the Upper Rhine, had suggested their transference to the north through Lord Raby at Berlin. The Margrave's sudden activity changed the situation, and Marlborough had the order rescinded almost as soon as it had been issued. The Prussians did not, however, take part in the attack at Hagenau, which succeeded in their absence. They rejoined the Margrave a few days later and were available for battle with Villars, had that offer been accepted. A study of the dates and orders shows that Marlborough acted in perfect good faith, but it is easy to understand why the Margrave had a grievance.

The forcing of the Lines of Brabant had produced a deep impression upon the Great King. He lost faith in a purely defensive policy. On July 21 he wrote Villeroy a letter which was afterwards to prove of the highest importance.

> Although I am convinced of your vigilance and the pains which you have taken to be carefully informed of the movements of the enemy, it is none the less most disagreeable to see them in the middle of the Low Countries masters of the lines and several important posts, and my army compelled to retire precipitately before them to avoid its entire defeat. . . . The disorder which has befallen you springs from the disposition of your army, which is consequent upon the great stretch of country you have to guard. I blame you in no way for what has happened; but, our affairs having definitely changed their character, we must forget a kind of warfare which is suited neither to the genius of the nation nor to the army you command—at least as numerous as that of the enemy. . . . You should not in the future avoid them with too much care; you should make war as we have made it in the past; hold the field, take full advantage of the strength of the positions which you may occupy. Do not expose yourself to a general engagement without need, *but do not avoid it with too much precaution*; because if the enemy perceive this they will take advantage of it.[1]

The fiascos at the Dyle and before Brussels enabled Chamillart to reach a conclusion upon Marlborough's generalship. He wrote to Villeroy on September 6:

> I shall not try much to conceal from you that I have only a mediocre opinion of the capacity of the Duke of Marlborough; his performance during this campaign destroys in my view the great impression which one had formed of him after the battle of Höchstädt, where the victory ought rather to be attributed to luck alone than to the capacity of the enemy generals; it is true that they knew how to profit by our bad dispositions. Send him back to England after the capture of Léau, and he will look in vain for his brilliant reception of last year.[2]

The Marshal did not feel so confident; nor did he avail himself of his new freedom during Marlborough's march around him towards Brussels. Both he and the Elector had dangled throughout on tenterhooks. They felt themselves being laid hold of by a strong, stealthy hand. Suddenly the grip had relaxed. The aggressive movements of the enemy had ceased. At the moment of crisis the allies had tamely withdrawn, and all their marches and countermarches resulted in nothing but a waste of their strength and of the

[1] Pelet, v, 57.   [2] *Ibid.*, 608.

remaining weeks of the campaign. The French leaders were, however, in little doubt about the cause. Marlborough had been frustrated by the Dutch. This was soon confirmed by the commotion which the episode excited in England and Holland, and by the talk of Europe. Villeroy felt that he had escaped so far by a miracle. He protested vehemently to Chamillart against sending any substantial reinforcements from his army to Villars. In his letter of September 30 he uses expressions which in boastful phrases reveal his secret fears.

> Would God that the King's interests could be served by my renouncement of command. I would reduce myself with pleasure to dwelling only in a flying camp [*camp volant*], so as to send all the troops to Marshal Villars; but I must point out to the King that the Duke of Marlborough *against every principle of war* wished again to attack the King's army in the last camp which we have just left. His journey to Turnhout was for the sole purpose of obtaining permission from the States. We have *an adventurer mortified with the scanty success of his campaign* who seeks only to stake all; he is within striking distance, in the same mood, and will be so to the last day of the campaign. *We have miraculously saved Flanders.* Would it be prudent to expose it to its fate, when it is only a question of waiting for twelve or fifteen days? . . .[1]

These painful words bring home to us the sense of domination and almost terror with which Marlborough had inspired the soul of his adversary. Villeroy felt himself face to face with a furious wild beast. True, it was caged by the Dutch veto, but it was tearing at the bars, and at any moment might break out in frightful strength and rage. Mercifully in another fortnight winter would come. The monster would have to hibernate. There would be a breathing-space. Meanwhile with a larger army, the first army of France, in an area fortified from end to end, he had "miraculously saved Flanders."

But the King in the tranquillity of Fontainebleau adhered to the robust views he had formed after the piercing of the lines; and his resolve reached its conclusion when a few months later Villeroy met the "mortified adventurer" on the field of Ramillies.

[1] Pelet, v, 90.

APPENDIX

I

A VINDICATION OF THE CONDUCT OF THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH BY GILBERT BURNET, BISHOP OF SALISBURY (*c.* 1710)

[The original is at Blenheim and is endorsed by the Duchess of Marlborough:

> this was put together from my papers by the Bishop of Salisbury not well don.
> to be put to the papers at the lodge.

There is a note by Archdeacon Coxe:

> It was afterwards altered and enlarged by Mr St Priest who accompanied the Duke abroad, and was employed by the Duchess in arranging her papers. He was recommended by Dr Hare. Part of the original draught submitted to Mr Walpole in 1711 or 12 was drawn up or corrected by Mr Manwaring.

For some observations on these drafts see the introduction to *Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, edited by William King (1930). St Priest's draft is at Blenheim, and a copy in the British Museum. Various other drafts are also at Blenheim. The following is the introduction only. The incidents related in the body of the text are those which figure with greater or less prominence in the published version of Sarah's *Conduct*.]

THE Writting of books is looked upon, as an Imployment not fit for our Sex: and if Some have succeeded well in it, others have exposed themselves by it too much, to Encourage a woman to venture on being an Author: but it will appear more unusual for me to write so copiously as I fear, I may be forced to doe, to tell my own Story, especially when, it will seem to carry reflexions wher one owes respect; But since I am like to leave behind me a Posterity, that is already distinguished by rank, and Estate, and that may branch out into more families, I am under some obligation to let them know, by what principalls, and Measures, I governed my selfe under a most envied favour, that I seemed to Engrosse for about twenty yeares without a Rivall, and to let them know at the same time by what meanes and by what accident I lost it.

I alwaies knew that favour was held by a very uncertain tenure, and

tho I confess I did not thinke my selfe in much danger of loseing it, and especially by the person, that undermined me, yet I thought, I had governed my selfe with such sincerity, and so much Caution, that when the turn of favour should come, I should fall gently, and be decently dismisst; but it has fallen out far otherwise; and as I have met with a treatment as litle looked for as deserved, so I have been pursued with so much Malice, falsehood and Calumny, and so many papers and bookes have mentioned me with as much Virulency, as Injustice, while I have with a Patience, that was both silent and respectfull, born so much that many I fancy thinke mee, as guilty, as my enemies would represent me, because of my bearing with a *becoming submission* such a vent, as has given to the inveterate Spleen of my enimies. The decencies of a Subject, *as well as the regards I owe as a Wife, and a Mother, have* had so much power over me, that I have long sate quiet under a Usage, that in another part of my life, I could not so easily have submitted to.

But as I owed it to my Selfe, so I owed it in a particular manner to all, that shall decend from me, to let them see, how little I deserved those characters, that have been bestowed on me, with as much confidence, as if those who defamed me, had full prove in their hands to vouch for them; but since I do this so late, I am resolved to doe it and to shew Vouchers for all I have to say in my own Justification, if unkind Inferences are made from it by opening things, that some may wish had remained still hid, those only are to blame, who not contented in useing me Ill, have set so many mercinary scriblers upon me, to run me down with noise, and impudence, as if I had robed both the Queen and the nation, and had not only deserved very Ill, but had been deeply Engaged in very ill designs against both Church and State, the Crown and country. I writte not my own vindication only to tell my own Story with truth, and evidence to Clear my Selfe, and to Justifie my own conduct, I writte with a farther designe to Instruct others, who may learn somewhat by it, tho at my Cost. I was born with a inbred Love to my Country, I hated tyranny by nature before I had read a Line upon the Subject: I thought mankind was born free, and that Princes were ordained to make their people happy; so I had alwaies In me an Invinceable aversion to Slavery, and to flatery, I also hated Popery, before I had ever looked into a booke of divinity: I thought alwaies, that the best way of Serving Princes, was to be true, & faithfull to them, and to Speake on all occasions to them without flattery, or dissimulation: this was laid in me by nature, as it became In time rooted in me by principel and as I hated flatterers, as Persons, that were betraying the Prince, whom they studied to please, so I thought in religion, it was the same thing, with relation to Almighty God, and truth and justice, purity, good nature, and Charity were the best characters of religion; and I looked on those, who without any regard to these things, were constant to many Prayers, and Sacraments, as the Same Sort of people in religion, that flatterers were in Courts betrayers

of the Prince and reproaches to a Court. Having had a much larger Share of Experience then might seem to belong to my yeares, I thought *it would be no unacceptable entertainment to the world*, to give some account of my Selfe, which I will doe with a Sincerity, that shall not have so much as the least mixture of art or dissimulation in it; where the particular instances are such as may seem to want more proofe, then my single word, I will mixe such proofs as shall take away even the possibility of doubting the truth of the revelation I am to give of my concerns. I doe not think the world ought to be troubled with impertinent stories I shall only insist on what was publike and fit to be known and that may be of some use and Instruction to others.

I came extream young into the Court and had the luck to be liked by manny in it but by none more particularly than the Queen who took such pleasure in my Company that as she had me much about her so upon her marriage she prevailed with her Father that I should be a Lady of her Bedchamber. Her Court was so odly composed that it was no extraordinary thing for me to be before them all in her favour, and confidence, this grew upon me to as high a degree, as was possible, *to all, that was passionately fond and tender*, nothing stood in my way, nothing was hard for me. I thought my Selfe (all others thought it too) that I was as secure in a continuance of a high degree of favour, as ever any person was. I upon such an advancement considered what I ought to do in order to deserve and to maintain it. The great principle I laid down in my self was to serve Her with an absolut fidelity and a constant zeal. But by fidelity I did not only mean not to betray her, not to discover her secrets, but to be true to her in every thing she trusted me with: but to avoid everything, that looked like dissimulation, and flattery, even tho I saw it might displease her; I was convinced that Princes were ruined by flatterers: I carried this so far, as to think it was a part of flattery, not to tell her every thing that was in any sort amisse in her. I saw poor K. James ruined by this that nobody would honestly tell him of his danger until it was past recovery: and that for fear of displeasing him. I therefore resolved to say every thing, that I thought concerned her to know, whom I served, with as much *affection*, as fidelity. I once thought that this would be for ever as acceptable to her as I found it had been for many years. I know I could have found a good excuse, when I had once honestly discharged my conscience to her, to have been after that silent, since it was like to have no other effect but to lose her favour: but I had that zeal for her, and for her true Interest, that I could not temper it, nor keep it within bounds. I confess many other considerations concurred to heighten my zeal. I could not think how measures taken and persons trusted, who were in the Interest of the Pretender, this I knew must end either in the ruin of the Nation, or in such convulsions to prevent it as might have very dreadful Consequences, which I had good reason to thinke, would be fatall to L. Marlborough and his family. I

therefore studied to prevent this with a zeal that was very honest, tho perhaps at some times it might seem too hot, and earnest, and upon this foundation it was, that my Credit lessened by degrees yet it was so long before I suspected I had a secret enemy that was under trust betraying me that I was past helping before I apprehended it. For as I was not only honest but open and frank perhaps to a fault, that I could not deceive, nor dissemble with any; so I had the same good opinion of those, who were severally at work to break my Interest, and knowing I had in so eminent a degree saved, and raised the whole family out of ruin and beggary, I could not think that there was such falsehood and Ingratitude in the world, as I found to be among them. I looked long on the progress of a favour, to which I had laid the foundation with a secret satisfaction; when I found I had put one about the Queen, who was become so acceptable to her. This was the chieffe maxime I had laid down to my self in the management of the high favour, I was in, and as I resolved to maintain it in the most dangerous part of it, which has had such an effect on me, it was no hard matter for me to maintain it in every other thing. My adherence so steadily to her Interest in the matter of the act of Parliament for her, in the late reign against the opinion of many, that advised to the contrary, was the greatest Instance, that I was capable of shewing it in. this drew after it not only the Losse of the favour of a King and Queen, that were like to outlive her, but were the true occasion of L. Marlboroughs disgrace, and of all that followed upon it, during so many years. I had as good reason to think I could have insinuated my selfe into Queen Mary's favour as any body about Court and I am well assured that if I could have brought the Princesse to an Absolute dependance upon Her nothing would have been denied me that I could have asked for my selfe or my family; but I would have sacrificed my life and family rather than have advised the (now) Queen to any thing that I thought not fit for her to submit to. I say no more of that matter because I have writ a particular account of that whole transaction very fully and very impartially to which I referre the world. I have been taxed as if I had made great advantages by secret practise of the Queens favour both before her coming to the Crown and since that time, and indeed this is so common in all, who have favour at Court that I doe not wonder, that it should be soe easily believed of me but as I had nothing from the Queen when she was Princesse but one 1000£ a year, besides that she assisted me with 10000£ towards the marrying my two Eldest daughters, so I have said it so often since the losse of her favour that it may be well believed, since nobody has been found out wicked enough to make a false story of me, yet a true one must have been discovered, that I never sold her favour, nor made any advantage by any place or pension that I promised to any, during the whole time of my favour. I am in this point in open defiance with all the world. I accepted very thankfully the places, that the Queen gave me, but tho she bid me lay by 2000£ a year out of

the Privy purse for my own use, I desired to be excused and did it not. Upon the Queens coming to the Crown I formed the best scheme I could of the ladies of the Bedchamber, without any other regard, but that I thought they were the properest persons to serve Her in the Bedchamber. I had the Robes in which I took great care to save the Queen much money by making punctual payments without any discount, no not for poundage, the commonly practised of all the Offices at Court. It is tru upon this accont I gave occasion to an outcry against my selfe, in former reigns where the payment was so uncertain things were bought in that Office at double or treble the price, when they had no hope of being paied in manny years: but I thought it not reasonable, that the Queen, who paied punctually, should pay excessively. I thought the Queens great consumption and ready payments was favour enough; but I never payd my own bills at her Cost. In the Privy purse the greatest enemies I have do confess I was an extraordinary manager and tho that is an office subject to no account yet I am ready to offer my accounts of it to the strictest canvassing; for I began with a happy thought, as if I had forseen what has happened since; I have the Queens hand for all the money that she called for so far was I from selling the Queens favour or cheating her in any sort, I did all I could to discover the cheats of others but was never so much charged with any my selfe. I have heard it much objected to me that I waited so seldome on the Queen and was so little about her and becase this is so contrary to the practise of all favourites I shall give a particular account of it. Soon after my marriage when our affairs were so narrow that a good degree of frugality was necessary, Ld *Marlborough tho his Inclination lay enough that way*, yet by reason of an indulgent gentleness that is natural to him he could not manage matters so as was convenient for our Circumstances, this obliged me to enter into the management of my family. I likewise thought I owed a great deal of care to the education of my children and besides this I had some friends, who I loved very well and in whose company I was well pleased to pass away some hours. I was sure I neglected no opertunity of doing the Queen all possible service and was never out the way, when there was any occasion for me. I had so satisfied the Queen before she came to the Crown, that she left me to my own liberty in this particular. After she came to the Crown, if I had changed my way, it would have looked as if I had been besieging or mistrusting her; I love liberty in every thing so I could not resolve to abridge my selfe of it, and since I knew I was serving the Queen with a most upright fidelity and zeal in which it was not possible for me to alter, I did not apprehend that any thing could have wrought the change I have felt in the Queen and for the putting persons of an assured Confidence, as my spies about her, as I had never any such thought so in case I should have had it, whom could I have thought more proper for that than the very person that has supplanted me. If I had brought her in with the view of having one whom I had

reason to believe true to me to have watched the Queen for me, I should have been very uneasy under the disappointment, but having brought her in meerly on the account of frienship and compassion without any other views I am the less concerned in that which was all her own fault, and had no excuse from any practise of mine, upon her I have but one thing more to reflect on, that has been objected to me, both by some friends and manny Enemies that I was very inaccessable, and oft denied, and that we did not live in the splendor and opennes that other favorites had done but when it is considered how many importunate suters the credit I had with the Queen must have brought on me and that I knew those who desired pensions could not succeed for the L Godolphin had laid before the Queen a measure for pensions which he hoped she would not exceed during the Warre it was no wonder if I studied to avoid giving the deniall to manny sutors. And having children whom both L Marlb. and I loved very tenderly it was naturall for us to desire to be easy in our house with our Children and a few friends and both L Marlb. and I agreed perfectly in that to abhorre a great open table with a promiscuous mixture of all sorts of people and the E. of Godolph. who was so united to us both in friendship and alliance that he was much with us hated the dining with such a rout about us as much as we did [crossed out in Duchess's copy]. I was very ready to serve all persons in distresse and had true merit and just pretensions, but it was impossible to hear all complaints and to serve all, but I could not bring my selfe to hear, or to promise, what I did not intend to perform. I have now touched in generall manny things which will help the reader to apprehend better the relation I am to give of the use I made of the favour I had so long enjoied, the steps in which, and the persons by whose practises I lost it, will appear in the narrative I am to give. I will only conclude this sort of preface to it with some reflections on all that has happned to me. It is an unspeakable comfort to me when I consider the Sincerity, and *true affection* with which I served the Queen and the just freedome I used with her. She had often charged me to do it and had as often promised never to be offended at it but to love me the better for it. If I *had not loved her with a most tender concern*, I would have satisfied my selfe with doing what I thought was enough to quiet my own Conscience; perhaps I was too eager and too pressing in things that went against the grain with the Queen, but in this I served no end, or designe of my own, I did it only to serve and to secure her: so that even suppose I may have carried this too farre, I have an unspeakable quiet in my own mind, when I reflect on all that is past, because I was tru to friendship, and to sacred promises whereas if I had more politically gone on enjoying my private favour with the advantages of it, I should have hated my selfe, and lived in a perpetual fret, and constraint. Perhaps some will think I went too farre in opposition to the favour that I saw was gone from me to another, I do not deny that I had a great indignation, when I discovered so blank

an ingratitude as I had met with from the person in the world whom I had obliged the most and had never once offended to give a handle to the injuries she did me. Had she been content with her private fortune I could have more easily born it but I confess it raised my Indignation to a greater height when I saw her put her selffe in Mr Harleys hands who after some years of too entire a confidence that both L. Marlb. and L. Godolph. put in him was under mining them as much as my Cosen was under mining me and all this in so Critcall a time that the whole affairs of Europe depending upon England it was not possible to guesse what designs men could have that were then in a combination to overturn all that had been done in a course of so manny years with such vast expense both of blood and tresure. This raised my Spirits not a litle. It may perhaps seem not so prudent of me to insist so much on my lodgings at Kensington since I never made use of them, and certainly at any other time and to any other person I would not have stood so much upon it. If my friends think I was too earnest in this matter I forgive them that and every other censure, so long as they acknowledge me to have acted with an uncorrupted fidelity and a disinterested zeal in every thing that related to the Queen, and her people, to the Crown and to the Protestant Succession. If I was not cuning dextrous favourite yet I was a tru and sincere one. If of late years I was less assiduous about the Queen it was because I found her so intirely changed from what she had once been to me, that I confess I could *neither bare it*, nor so much as disguise it, *but to the praise of vertue, sincerity and good Conscience*, I must say, I have so perfect a quiet in my own mind now, that the struggle is over that I cannot expresse it. I may have committed errors in it, I may have judged of others by my selfe, knowing that I could like none the worse, who I believed loved me because they used all du freedom with me, when I had encouraged them to it. But upon the whole I have a good Conscience within me, that supports me; so that I am easy in my selfe and with relation to all other I am only sorry they have acted parts that the whole world could not have brought me to. *I am sorry for it and I heartily pray for them.* I will still go on in a course of integrity and trueth for that will preserve me tho not in a Court, yet in the sight of that God who loves trueth in the inward parts to whom I own with humble confidence [I] make my appeals for to him both the purity of my heart and the cleannes of my hands are well known. I will turn myself to him being now out of the dissipation of a Court of attendance and business. I will apply my selfe more and more to true Religion and not value my selfe upon the form and show of it without the power and effect of it upon my thoughts words and actions, nothing is hid from him, no false colours can deceive him and I am sure when I serve him with the zeal and affection with which I studied to serve the Queen under him he will never cast me off, nor forsake me nor suffer my Enemies to triumph over me with this I end my Introduction.

II

SOME INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HISTORIANS FOR BEGINNING THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH'S HISTORY

[By Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Printed from the original in the possession of Earl Spencer.]

I HAVE determined to give the Materials in my Possession to the Gentlemen that are to write the Duke of Marlborough's History. (They are Mr Glover and Mr Mallet.) For it will take a great deal of time only to sort the Papers and read them over. (And these Gentlemen are to finish it as soon as they can with the approbation of my Executors, and the Earl of Chesterfield.) I remember to have read somewhere a great Author that I would have imitated in this History of the Duke of Marlborough, beginning in the same Stile: I write the History of the Duke of Marlborough. And I would have it throughout in that Manner: For it will require no Flourishes to set it off, but short plain Facts. I believe it must in the common way say he was Sr Winstan Churchill's Son, a Gentleman of Dorsetshire. I don't know whether it is proper or necessary to add what I am going to write, tho' I think it a Merit, that Sr Winstan Churchill, his Father, had about £1000 a Year from his Father, who liked his Grand-Son better than his own Son, settled it upon him, that his Father could only enjoy it for his Life. But the Duke of Marlborough, when he was but eight & twenty, joined with his Father, who was in Debt, and let him sell his Estate. From the very Beginning of his Life he never Spent a Shilling beyond what his Income was. He began with the first Commission of an Ensign in the Army, and went on regularly thro' every Step of that Profession: and in King Charles the Second's time served in France under Marshal Turenne, from whom he learnt a great deal. And I think it is more Honour to rise from the lowest Step to the greatest, than, as the Fashion is now, to be Admirals without ever having seen Water but in a Bason, or to make Generals that never saw any Action of War, & only felt from the Generosity of their Temper that they were not to pursue a flying Enemy. As to the Duke of Marlborough's Manner of proceeding, you will find a full account in the Papers I shall give you, & likewise of all the Expences of Queen Anne's War. And you will easily compare the difference of the Expences for that War which was so successful, and the present War, directed by Men of great Knowledge & Generosity: which, tho the Publick pays the whole, they cannot with any Reason complain of it. The Duke of Marlborough had never any vanity, and therefore living so many years with great Employments, he left a great Estate: which was no Wonder he

should do, since he lived long and never threw any Money away. And Mony was for many years at six per Cent. And I have heard him solemnly swear, when it was of no Signification to do it to me, that he never in the whole Reign of Queen Anne sold one Commission, Title, or anything to anybody when he had so much favour from Queen Anne. He had a great deal of Compassion in his Nature, and to those that he had been long acquainted with he gave Mony out of his Pocket to those that were poor, tho' they were not of his Opinion. I am living Witness of this: for I was directed by him to pay some Pensions when he was abroad, and have letters that prove the Truth of it from the Persons. When he left King James, which was with the greatest Regret imaginable, but he saw it was plain that King James could not be prevented any other way from establishing Popery and arbitrary Power to the Ruin of England. And I really believe he then thought that the Army would force the Prince of Orange to go back to Holland, when they had found some way to secure the Prince of Orange's Interest, & to have the Laws of England continued, which King James had so solemnly promised to do when he came to the Crown. Every thing that has happened since demonstrates that no King is to be trusted, and it is plain that if the Duke of Marlborough had had the same way of thinking that our present wise Ministers have he might have been anything that an ambitious Man could desire by assisting King James to settle Popery in England. I hope this History will be writ as soon as tis possible: for while I am living, I shall be able to answer any Question that they may have occasion to ask: for I would have no thing in it but what is the real Truth.

I have several very curious things in my Power to prove concerning the Behaviour of both Parties, Whigg and Tory after the Revolution. But I imagine it would be best to let all that drop, because I really cannot say which side is most infamous. I can't see much difference between them, both sides designing nothing but their own advantage. The Whiggs had this Advantage that their pretended Principle was for Liberty and the Good of their Country. The Tories was for Jure Divino by which I suppose they imagined they should have all the Power and Places of Advantage divided amongst themselves. But every Thing they did was very short of the great Performances from the great Parts & Honesty of my Lord Carteret and his Partner my Lord Bath.

III

WILLIAM III's DIPLOMATIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE EARL OF MARLBOROUGH (1701)

[S.P., 104/69, ff. 152–155. Another copy is at Blenheim.]

*WILLIAM R.

Instructions to Our Right Trusty and Rt Wellbeloved Cousin & Councell[o]r John Earl of Marlborough, whom Wee have appointed to be Our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary at the Negotiations for the Peace of Europe, at the Hague or elsewhere.

Given at Our Court at Hampton Court the 26 Day of June 1701. In the thirteenth Year of Our Reign.

Whereas Our Loyall & Dutifull Subjects the Commons in Parliam[en]t assembled, did some time since by their humble Address, pray that Wee would be pleased to enter into such Negotiations in Concert with the States Gen[era]ll of the United Provinces, & other Potentates, as may most effectually conduce to the mutual Safety of these Kingdomes, and the States Gen[era]ll, & the Preservation of the Peace of Europe, and that Wee promised them immediately to order Our Ministers abroad to enter into such Negotiations accordingly, and did thereupon to that Purpose send Instructions to Alexander Stanhope Esqr Our Envoy Extraordin[a]ry to the said States Gen[era]ll, and our Plenipotentiary for these Negotiations, & for the more Effectuall carrying on thereof, have now appointed you to be Our Amb[assador] Extraordin[a]ry & Plenipotentiary to that Purpose. You are therefore to enter forthwith into such Negotiations with the Ministers of France & Spaine and other Potentates at the Hague, in Concert with the Ministers of the States Gen[era]ll, in Order to obtain the Conditions following, & in all other Matters which the said States shall think necessary for their further security:

1. That the Most Christian King shall order all his Troops, that now are, or shall be in garrison in any of the Spanish Towns in the Netherlands, actually to retire from thence, so as the Same may be entirely evacuated of french Troops, within such Time as shall be agreed upon in the Treaty, & that he shall engage not to send any Forces into any of those Towns or Countries.

2. That no Troops but such as consist of Naturall borne Subjects of Spaine, or Germans continue in the Spanish Netherlands, except such Troops as are to be placed & remain in Cautionary Towns, mentioned in the next Article.

3. That for the better Security of Us, & the States Gen[era]ll, & quieting the Minds of Our People, there shall be delivered to Us & to the

said States, Cautionary Towns, within such Time as shall be agreed by the Treaty, to be kept by Our Garrisons respectively, & none other, Viz. to Us the Towns of Neuport & Ostend, & to the States Gen[era]ll the Town of Luxemburg, Namur and Mons, in the condition they now are, to be kept by Our Garrisons, and those of the said States respectively, during such time as shall be agreed upon, with a proviso that the same be done without Prejudice to the Rights and Revenues of Spaine.

4. That no Town or Countries belonging to the Spanish Netherlands, or any Ports whatever belonging to the Crown of Spaine, shall be exchanged with France, or any ways delivered up or put undet the French Government.

5. That Our Subjects shall enjoy the same Liberties & Priviledges in all Parts of the Spanish Dominions as well by Sea as by Land, as they did at the time of the Death of the late King of Spaine, and in as ample Manner as the French or any other Nation does or shall do hereafter.

6. That the Emperor be invited to join in this Treaty, & that any other Princes & States who think fitt to unite for the Preservation of the Peace of Europe, may be admitted into the same.

7. And whereas the Commons in Parliament assembled, have, by their humble Address unanimously assured Us, that they will be ready on all Occasions to assist Us in supporting such Allyances as Wee shall think fitt to make, in Conjunction with the Emp[ero]r & the States Gen[era]ll for the Preservation of the Liberties of Europe, the Prosperity and Peace of England, & for reducing the Exorbitant Power of France, you are therefore to Act in the Negotiations carrying on at the Hague, in Conjunction as well with the Ministers of the Emperor, as of the States Gen[era]ll, to the Purposes aforesaid, and you are to declare upon all fitting Occasions, as well to the french Ambass[ador]r as others concerned, that Wee do insist, according to what has been proposed by Us & the States Gen[era]ll, that the Emp[ero]r should have reasonable Satisfaction in his Pretensions, & that Our Intention is, not to separate from him, But Wee do not expect that the Emp[ero]r's Minister should be admitted at the Conference with the french Ambass[ado]r, since Hostilities are actually begun in Italy.

8. It is not Our Intention to tye you up by the foregoing Instructions, as that you shall not Negotiate elsewhere then at the Hague, but you are at Liberty to enter into Negotiations for the Ends aforesaid, in any other Place that shall be thought proper for that Purpose.

9. You are to give a free Communication of these your Instructions, and such others as you shall receive from Us, and of all Proceedings on this Subject to the Pensioner, & desire a reciprocall Communication from him as a Matter for Our Service.

10. You shall Observe such further Instructions & Directions, on this Subject, as you shall from time to time receive from Us, or one of our Principall Secretaries of State, with whom you shall constantly

correspond and transmitt to him an Account of all Matters which shall happen in the Course of your Negotiation & of all Occasions of Moment that shall come to your Knowledge.

W. R.

WILLIAM R.

Instructions for our Right Trusty and Rt Wellbeloved Cousin & Councell[o]r John Earl of Marlborough, whom Wee have appointed to our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary, for treating and concluding an Allyance between Us, the Emperor, the States Gen[era]ll of the United Provinces, & such other Princes as are willing to enter into the Same for Secureing the Peace & Liberty of Europe. Given at Our Court at Hampton Court the 26 Day of June 1701 in the 13th year of Our Reign.

Whereas Wee have thought fit in Pursuance of the Advice of Our Parliam[en]t, to appoint You to be Our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary for making Such Allyances in Conjunction with the Emp[ero]r & the States Gen[era]ll, as are necessary for preserving the Liberties of Europe, the Prosperity of England, & reducing the Exorbitant Power of France, Wee think it necessary to give you the following Instructions for your Directions and Guidance therein.

You shall repair to the Hague, or such other Place as shall be thought proper, & there conferr with the Ministers of the Emperor, the States Gen[era]ll, & such other Princes, as shall be sufficiently Authorized thereunto, about making such an Union & Allyance between Us, & the said Princes, as may be most conducing to the great Ends before mentioned.

In the first Place, Wee think it absolutely necessary that Consideration be had to the Security of the United Provinces, by the entire Removall of the french Forces out of the Spanish Netherlands, & by putting those Provinces into such a State that they may not disturb the Quiet of their Neighbours, nor be at the Disposall and under the Influence of France, and as may most Effectually provide for the Security of England & Holland, & the Common Interest of Christendome.

And the Emperor's Forces being entered into Italy, to procure Satisfaction in his Pretensions to the Succession of Spaine, you shall informe yourself of his Minister what are the Termes of Satisfaction he would particularly insist on, and give Us an Acc[oun]t thereof, upon which Wee will signify Our Pleasure to you for your Proceeding therein.

And as to any other Princes that are willing to enter into this Allyance, you shall receive what Proposalls they have to make in Relation to their particular Interests & communicate the same to Us, for our farther Direction.

And Whereas Wee understand by Our Minister at Lisbon, that the King of Portugal has sent Instructions to his Envoy at the Hague, to

join in such measure as may conduce to the Preservation of the Publick Peace, you shall informe yourself of the said Envoy, what it is the King of Portugall doe propose, and shall at the same time represent to him, how necessary it is that the King of Portugall shuld enter into Common Measures with Us, the Emperor and the States Gen[era]ll, as well for the Security & Advantage of his Owne Dominions as for supporting the Gen[era]ll Interests of Christendome.

And in the Treaties you shall make, particular Regard must be had to the security & improvement of the Trade of Our Kingdoms, for which you shall receive more particular Instructions, as matters come to be ripe for it.

You are to give a free Communication of these your Instructions, & such others as you shall receive from Us, & of all Proceedings on this Subject to the Pensioner of Holland, & desire a reciprocall Communication from him, as a Matter for Our Service.

You shall Observe such further Instructions & Directions on this Subject, as you shall from time to time receive from Us, or one of Our Principall Secretaries of State, with whom you shall constantly correspond and transmitt to him an Account of all Matters which shall happen in the Course of your Negotiations, & of all Occasions of Moment that shall come to your Knowledge.

W. R.

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